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SISTERS OF CHARITY OF LEAVENWORTH

OFFICE OF JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Oral virtual
testimony
Proponent



Date: February 9, 2022

To: Senate Committee on State and Federal Affairs

From: John Shively, Lead Coordinator

RE: Support for Senate Bill 369

Dear Chairman Olson and members of the Committee,

The Sisters of Charity follow in the traditions of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, who began the daughters of charity with a particular emphasis on serving those living in poverty. It is in the same tradition that we support SB 369, which can make Kansas more competitive in the development of affordable housing. Currently, Colorado, Nebraska, Missouri, and Oklahoma all have such a program¹, which means affordable housing projects in Kansas are at a competitive disadvantage.

Creating a state program that developers can use in conjunction with the Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program would provide much-needed investment into increasing Kansas' housing stock. This also benefits many of the working Kansans who pay more than 30% of their income on housing.

Affordable housing programs can benefit the development of housing for Veterans

Developers in States like Illinois and Missouri have demonstrated how beneficial LIHTC funds can be in developing affordable housing for Veterans. In Illinois, the St. Leo Campus for Veterans is a permanent supportive housing program that has 141 furnished studio apartments.² In Kansas City on the Missouri side, St. Michael's Veterans center has 117 apartment homes with specialized services.

¹ A multitude of state have state affordable housing tax credit programs, for an interactive map please see: <https://www.novoco.com/resource-centers/affordable-housing-tax-credits/application-allocation/state-lihtc-program-descriptions>

² <https://affordablehousingonline.com/housing-search/Illinois/Chicago/St-Leo-Campus-for-Veterans/10058041>

Affordable housing programs help the economy and can bring in new taxpayers

The passage of these tax credits could generate new construction jobs, which would both be beneficial to the economy and bring increased revenue to the state. In addition, by increasing affordable housing in Kansas, our communities can attract new taxpayers to live and work in our communities.

Housing is a justice issue

Ultimately, housing is an issue of justice. This is clear from the data in the latest housing survey, but we also know this is true from our everyday encounters with unhoused Kansans.

Clean, safe, and affordable housing is a necessity for protecting human dignity. Not only do unhoused people face potentially life-threatening situations from their lack of access to housing, society often compounds injustices by denying them access to work, social programs, and a variety of services because of their unhoused status. Measures that work to establish affordable housing ultimately are measures that recognize the dignity and worth of every human person.