



January 31, 2021

To: Sen. Carolyn McGinn, Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Local Government

Re: Senate Bill 316

We are respectfully submitting testimony opposing SB 316. Your consideration of our concerns is greatly appreciated.

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Janel Bowers

For the last 30 plus years Friends of JCDS has been addressing the needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who live in Johnson County, KS. These needs are ones that are not addressed through government assistance or funding. Needs such as shoes, groceries, medical assistance, and yes, affordable and accessible housing.

As you may be aware, the current housing climate has priced most Kansans out of competing for modest housing, regardless of abilities or disabilities. There is a lack of any housing for those that make less than the median income, and little to no housing available for individuals that require adaptations such as ramps, accessible bathrooms or widened doorways to accommodate wheelchairs.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalitions' 2021 Out of Reach report, in order to live in a 2-bedroom apartment a Kansan would have to make \$16.91/hour working full time. In the metro area, where Johnson County is included, the rate jumps to \$19.63.

The present real estate market is NOT friendly to affordable housing. Low Income Housing Tax Credit properties are rapidly facing expiring periods and new projects are not being funded at a satisfactory rate of replacement. Single family homes suitable for small group living situations are being purchased by "flippers" at above market prices make creating these homes difficult and resulting in homes selling for premiums at or above 20% of market value.

We have long since passed crisis levels in obtaining safe and affordable housing for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The rental market is driven by the housing market. The disappearance of Low Income Housing Tax Credit properties, acceptance by private landlords of Housing Choice Vouchers and now, the possibility of

municipalities being able to “zone out” housing based on who might be living in the home is of great concern.

As you’ve already read from countless others, this bill brings numerous concerns regarding discrimination and denial of rights. And Friends of JCDS echoes those concerns.

But we are also concerned with the immense logistical issues that would arise from determining where to put group homes? Would the state develop a registry to search for groups homes by address? Much like the sex offender registry? How would that violate privacy standards as this would effectively disclose private medical conditions to anyone who chose to access the information? How quickly would that be updated? Who would be in charge of it? How would people know where a group home could be put?

If municipalities were able to restrict housing options available to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities by limiting number of homes allowed by distance, is Kansas prepared to re-open state institutions such as Norton State Hospital and Winfield? What would that cost?

Thank you again for considering all the implications of SB316

Sincerely,



Janel Bowers

Chief Developmental and Operations Officer

Friends of JCDS, Inc