

Testimony of Cindy Enriken to the  
House Committee on Local Government  
Opponent for HB 2083 - February 1, 2023

Chairman Bergquist and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to House Bill 2083 which, if passed and signed into law, would prohibit municipalities from enacting a local vacant property registry.

I spent my early years in Lincoln, Kansas, where my family has lived since 1922. So you understand that I love that community and consider it my hometown.

For years I wanted to give something back to my hometown as a way of thanking the community for the memories and experiences I cherish . . .

of lovely and loved homes and lawns; for the wonderful city park and swimming pool where I spent so many hours; for the crisp, clear fall nights when I sat with friends and watched hometown football games while I breathed in clean air.

When I realized that houses in town had been torn down, that many others were vacant and appeared abandoned, were falling down due to neglect, and were at risk of being demolished . . . I wanted to do something to stop the decline. So with support from my husband I withdrew money from our retirement account to purchase houses, rehab them, and return them to the community.

Presently I own three houses in Lincoln and I'm working to restore my first one. It's tough, physical labor, and while I can't do all the work myself, I'm loving every bit of it and know that I'm finally giving back to my hometown.

And I'm not the only one. There is a small but mighty group of men and women trying to save neglected and abandoned properties in Lincoln - save them from the landfill and at the same time save our heritage.

I bet that every one of you on this committee can call to mind the image of an abandoned property in your community. If you've lived there long enough you remember what it used to look like before the degradation began. That deteriorating property is costing your town needed tax revenues that could be used for the benefit of the entire community.

The Kansas Legislator Briefing Book of 2020, prepared by the Kansas Legislative Research Department explained that vacant property registration is "the first step a municipality can take to gather more information about the particular abandoned property issues the community is facing, and it may help prevent abandonment altogether."

I want to see a vacant property registration ordinance passed in Lincoln County because it will be an important tool that can be used to combat the terrible problems of neighborhood blight and loss of safe, affordable housing. If HB 2083 is passed, Lincoln won't be able to enact a that ordinance. The entire community will ultimately pay the price with increased blight and loss of usage of another commercial building or residence.

I urge you to vote against HB 2083.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

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