

**Testimony before the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee
Senate Bill 400
March 6, 2012**

My name is Arly Allen. I am a member of the Centennial Neighborhood Association in Lawrence, Kansas.

For the past 15 years our organization has been working to protect our neighborhood from being converted from a classic single family neighborhood to a neighborhood composed of student rental properties. Over time we have seen landlords purchase houses and turn them into rental businesses. As these houses fill up with students, our neighborhood loses its character. Quiet family homes have become weekend party palaces. Once quiet streets are now lined with parked cars as three, four, five or more students move into houses next door. Trash and noise replaced well-kept lawns and well-kept homes.

The change in our neighborhood has caused many families to move away. When families leave, they take their children with them. When the children leave, our schools shut down. Centennial School, where my children went, closed 5 years ago. Closing other elementary schools has been proposed as families move away from the university area.


Closing schools is a costly event for the neighborhood, the school board, and the city itself. The city loses money, the school district loses children and our neighborhoods fall apart.

For 15 years we have been working to stop this deterioration. In 2000, at our urging, the City of Lawrence passed a rental registration ordinance which sought to bring this situation under control. No sooner had the city passed this ordinance than a member of your legislature introduced and passed KSA 12-16, 123 which effectively prevented the City of Lawrence from enforcing its own ordinances. The city was told that it could not legally determine how many people were living in any rental property in single family neighborhoods.

For the last 10 years we have been attempting to protect our neighborhoods in the face of this bad law. This past fall, the city of Lawrence once again strengthened their rental ordinances. We can work together to address these issues but we need your help. We need to get rid of KSA 12-16,123.

We urge the passage of Senate Bill 400 with an amendment to repeal the existing statute or in the current form which will at least allow the City of Lawrence to protect its homes, its neighborhoods and its schools.

Thank you for your help and understanding in an important issue for Lawrence.

Sincerely,

Arly Allen

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