

Committee on Senate Judiciary
WRITTEN TESTIMONY
March 6, 2019
SUPPORT of SB150

The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) is a statewide non-profit organization whose membership is the 26 sexual and domestic violence programs serving victims across Kansas. KCSDV provides information; training; and analysis and policy work on issues impacting victims of domestic and sexual violence, their families, and their communities.

KCSDV strongly supports the passage of SB150. Many domestic violence and sexual assault victims report losing their housing due, at least in part, to the violence in their lives. Several jurisdictions have enacted laws specifically indicating that domestic and sexual violence victims are protected from housing discrimination. An increasing number of other states and localities have passed laws that prohibit housing discrimination against, or provide some protections for, domestic violence and sexual assault victims in certain circumstances; that permit victims to terminate leases; that protect victims from eviction for domestic/sexual violence; and/or that permit victims to have their locks changed. The 2005 and 2013 reauthorizations of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) include important protections for victims living in all federally subsidized housing programs. However, many victims in Kansas do not live in federally subsidized housing and do not share in the VAWA housing protections for domestic violence and sexually assault victims. While a few localities have passed housing protections, most victims in Kansas are not protected.

Ashley was living in a community without local housing protections. She was sexual assaulted in her apartment. Following the assault, she pleaded with her landlord to allow her to terminate her lease 6 months early. Her request was denied. By continuing to live in that space she was suffering ongoing trauma that manifested into migraine headaches, ulcerative colitis, and depression. Ashley believes that her recovery would have been much different had she been able to move out of the space where the assault occurred.

Mandy lived in an apartment complex in a small community in Kansas with her husband and small child. Mandy's husband verbally and physically assaulted her multiple times inside the apartment. Neighbors called the police on three occasions. After the third police response, Mandy's husband was placed in jail. While he was in jail, the landlord alerted Mandy that her lease would not be renewed. When Mandy inquired as to why her lease was not being renewed

the landlord responded “you cause too much trouble around here with the police coming all the time.” This statement was evidence that Mandy’s lease was not being renewed as a direct result of domestic violence.

For victims of sexual assault and domestic violence there are often many barriers to staying safe. KCSDV asks that accessing and securing housing **not** be one of those barriers for victim safety. We strongly support the passage of SB150 and encourage the Senate Judiciary Committee to provide the housing protections victims in Kansas desperately need.

Submitted by,

Sara Rust-Martin, JD, MSW
Legal and Policy Director
KCSDV