



Testimony of Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health
To House Committee on Judiciary
Written Proponent Testimony on HB 2357 | February 10, 2025

Chairwoman Humphries and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony for HB 2357, which would require expungement of certain court records of such eviction actions, along with other provisions. Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health (LDCPH) serves residents in Douglas County and Lawrence to create abundant and equitable opportunities for good health.

We are supportive of this legislation, as eviction filings are often a permanent record for renters, even if they are not evicted from their homes. Further, evictions, particularly eviction filings, can result in property owners regularly declining rental applications or using them as an opportunity to provide unsafe or worse conditions in their housing. Tenant credit reporting agencies often create reports for property owners about tenant "risk scores" which include eviction filings, even if the tenant was not evicted. ⁱ It is common for property owners to decline to accept a tenant if there is an eviction filing on their record. Sealing evictions from public view until the judgment is reached is a holistic practice that ensures all information is accurate before a tenant is evicted. Further, eviction filings are also costly for property owners and the community. Property owners, many of whom are small businesses owners themselves, can face a significant financial strain by hiring attorneys and incurring filing fees. The opportunity for sealing allows for additional opportunities for mediation, which can reduce the mental and financial load of both renters and property owners. ⁱⁱ

This bill also considers eviction expungement, which we are also supportive of. Even if a tenant is evicted, eviction records can limit the ability of a tenant to rent housing. This can cause several problems that often ripple out and affect the community. As an example, Lawrence has a large population of unhoused people. Many unhoused individuals have faced eviction at some point in their lives and encounter challenges in accessing rental housing. Data recently collected from the Douglas County Tenant Experience Report, noted that out of the sample surveyed, 20 individuals became homeless due to an eviction. Further, several of these tenants also feared displacement on the regular. (Fig. 1) ⁱⁱⁱAllowing for expungement would give judges the opportunity to review each case and provide relief to renters who may have just been down on their luck and needed additional support.

LDCPH urges you to consider the benefits of this legislation and pass it favorably out of committee.

Sincerely,

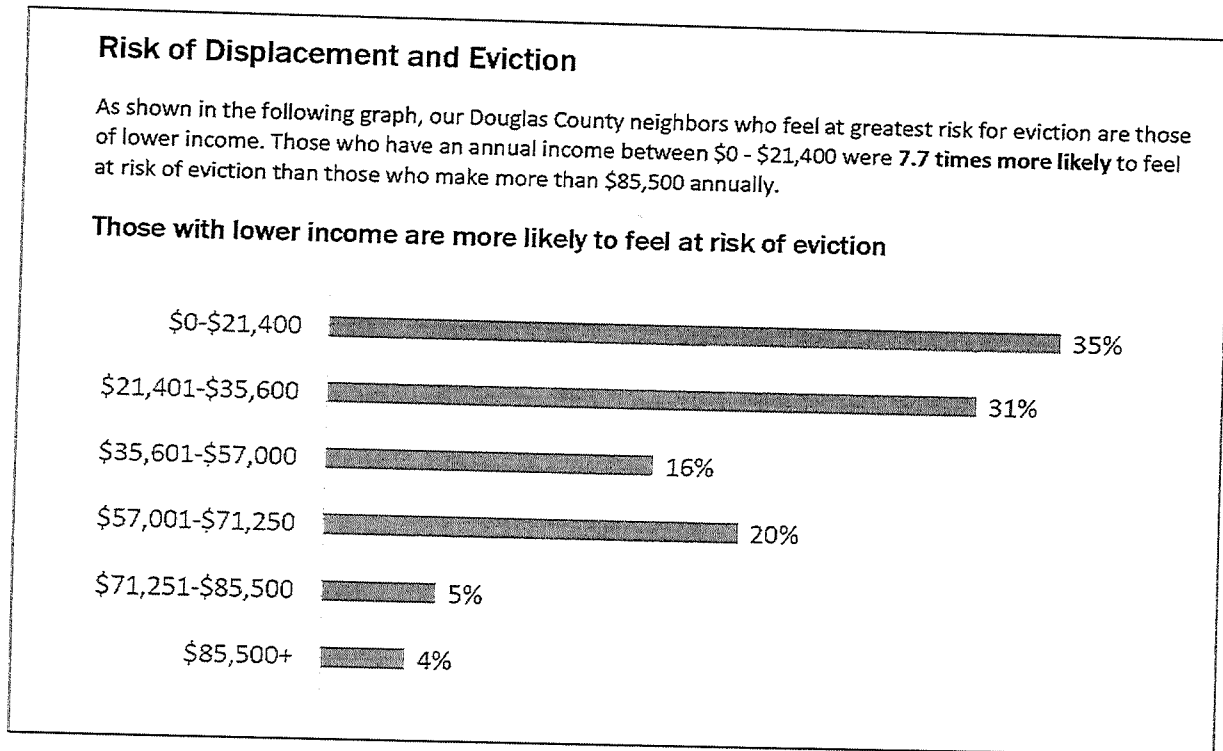
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FIGURE 1. Risk of Displacement, Douglas County Tenant Experiences Report, 2024



ⁱ Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. (2022). *Tenant Background Checks Market*. https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfph_tenant-background-checks-market_report_2022-11.pdf

ⁱⁱ Stevens, W. (2023). *Family-Friendly Courts: State Legislatures' Role in Improving Eviction Proceedings*. National Conference for State Legislatures. <https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/family-friendly-courts-evictions>

ⁱⁱⁱ Douglas County Tenant Experiences Report. (2024). In *Douglas County Tenant Experiences Report* (pp. 1–4). <https://communityhealth.ku.edu/sites/communityhealth/files/2024-10/Douglas%20County%20Tenant%20Experiences%20Report.pdf>

Additional Information:

Full Douglas County Tenant Experiences Report: <https://communityhealth.ku.edu/sites/communityhealth/files/2024-10/Douglas%20County%20Tenant%20Experiences%20Report.pdf>

Best Practices for Eviction Proceedings Initial Report, 2022: <https://kscourts.gov/KSCourts/media/KsCourts/court%20administration/Committees/Eviction/Best-Practices-Eviction-Proceedings.pdf>



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