

House Local Government Committee
Hearing on HB 2646
February 12, 2012
City of Topeka
Scott J. Schneider J.D.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, the City of Topeka supports HB 2646.

Vacant and abandoned property can have a devastating effect on property values and the viability of any community. The City of Topeka has recently been trying to identify ways to move commercial property to its highest and best use. During that process the City has attempted to balance the public safety, health and wellness with the rights of property owners.

One solution the City has identified is to dis-incentivize absentee ownership. At the same time, the City understands commercial property can and often does enter business cycles where development is more difficult. Allowing for three years worth of taxes to lapse for properties that have a blighted influence in a neighborhood should address any unanticipated market condition.

The City of Topeka will continue to use local tools to improve the condition of our community and the attractiveness of our neighborhoods. We believe HB 2646 strikes a meaningful balance and should be an additional useful tool.