

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE CAPITOL
300 S.W. TENTH AVENUE
TOPEKA, KS 66612
(785) 296-7482
linda.gallagher@house.ks.gov

7804 MONROVIA STREET
LENEXA, KS 66216
(913) 631-3512
LJGallagher@kc.rr.com



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
VICE-CHAIR: CHILDREN AND SENIORS
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TRANSPORTATION

LINDA GALLAGHER
23RD DISTRICT

February 8, 2018

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 345

Chairman Tyson, Vice-Chairman Kerschen, Ranking Member Holland and members of the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee, I submit this testimony today in support of SB 345.

This bill would grant a sales tax exemption to the Friends of Johnson County Developmental Supports, an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides additional support to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who receive residential, day or case management services from Johnson County Developmental Supports. JCDS is the community developmental disability organization (CDDO) for Johnson County, Kansas.

Specifically, SB 345 would amend K.S.A. 2017 Supp. 79-3606 to exempt from sales taxation all goods and services purchased by a contractor for construction projects at 12 group homes owned and operated by Friends of Johnson County Developmental Supports.

This organization raises funds to help disabled people secure affordable housing that is accessible – with ramps, wider doorways and accessible bathrooms – as well as to provide a Special Assistance program that helps that helps applicants pay for things such as dental fillings, new shoes for work and sometimes even necessities such as food and utilities. Friends of JCDS is a stand-alone, non-profit agency that supplants no county, state or federal dollars. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities come to Friends of JCDS as tenants needing accessible, affordable housing or with requests for help with basic needs.

The organization has been awarded a significant amount of grant money, as well as charitable contributions from several local sources, to make significant renovations and expansions to 12 of its group homes in Johnson County. These funds will make accessibility improvements and other renovations a reality. These projects will ensure that Friends of JCDS will be able to continue to offer low-cost and accessible housing to 51 disabled individuals. This will also help the organization to plan for additional housing options as it continues to meet the growing need for affordable and accessible housing in Johnson County.

Friends of JCDS is requesting to receive sales tax exemptions for these upcoming construction projects in order to more effectively utilize grant and donor funds and to achieve all necessary improvements. The

savings realized from tax exemptions will provide additional funds to make one more accessible bathroom, which a person can use independently; to add one more ramp to a home; and to install an additional ceiling lift that will reduce falls and injuries as well as preserve the dignity of residents. The money for these construction projects will stay in Kansas, contributing to the state's economy and creating local jobs for small contractors.

I know the residents of these group homes appreciate having access to the housing provided by Friends of JCDS, and they truly feel at home there. I ask for your support for SB 345 to help this organization stretch its dollars even further in fulfilling its important mission. Thank you.