



February 2, 2022

Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee
State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, Kansas 661612

Re: Support of the Creation of a Kansas Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program SB 369

Chair and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Health Forward Foundation (Health Forward), I submit this letter of testimony in support of the establishment of a low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) program in Kansas. Health Forward encourages our legislature to ensure a Kansas LIHTC program advances affordable housing construction in both high- and low-income neighborhoods as a means of providing greater housing stability, increased economic opportunity, and improved health outcomes for Kansans.

Numerous studies show housing developments in neighborhoods with low poverty, low crime, and academically high performing schools can deliver significant benefits for their residents. Research also shows that living in higher-income neighborhoods improves adults' mental and physical health, which can reduce the stress associated with living in neighborhoods experiencing higher incidents of crime and limited access to public green spaces. Living in a higher-income neighborhood has also been linked to higher employment and earnings among adults and can significantly increase young children's test scores, chances of attending college, and adult earnings. LIHTC developments in lower-income communities are also important, as they can contribute to the revitalization of low-income neighborhoods when combined with substantial investments to improve access to high-paying jobs, high-performing schools, or provide other economic opportunities in those neighborhoods.

LIHTC developments can also play an important role in supporting access to safe, quality, healthy housing for people of color and rural residents. LIHTC developments located outside racially and economically segregated neighborhoods can expand the housing choices and economic opportunities available to those households.

A thoughtful LIHTC policy can, and should, advance equity in Kansas. LIHTC programs provide a clear pathway from rental occupancy to home ownership for the low-wage earners residing in them, many of whom live in rural areas or represent communities of color. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities offers excellent resources on the benefits of LIHTC programs and Health Forward encourages members of the Legislature to review them as you consider a LIHTC program for Kansas, as we did for support of the points raised in this letter.

Please feel free to contact me at mbryantmacklin@healthforward.org if I can provide additional information or support on this issue.

Respectfully,

McClain Bryant Macklin

McClain Bryant Macklin
Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives
Health Forward Foundation