



Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

House Bill 2376

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On behalf of the

Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas

House Committee on Local Government
February 15, 2023

Good morning Chairman Bergquist and Members of the Committee.

I am Paul Davis, lobbyist for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas (“the UG”), and I am pleased to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 2376. Wyandotte County is a place that values diversity and the bill takes a significant step forward in making sure that Kansas communities like ours are welcoming.

This proposal would authorize any city, county, or the Kansas Human Rights Commission to eliminate a racially restrictive covenant by redacting it from the plat description or HOA governing documents. Most of the covenant restrictions on record prohibit ownership by African-Americans, Jews, and members of other ethnic or minority groups. Under current law, this language can only be removed by a homeowner’s association.

Even though these restrictive covenants are not enforceable, this bill will allow municipalities to remove these remnants of racism and anti-semitism. It is important for the Legislature and individual communities to send a strong message that this type of racist language is unacceptable and not reflective of Kansas values.

Lastly, I want to note that this is a fundamental issue of local control. There is no statewide issue concerning restrictive covenants registries that calls for action by the Legislature. But by passing this bill, the Legislature will allow local governments to eliminate these restrictive covenants.

On behalf of the UG, I thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony and I ask to move forward with favorable action on House Bill 2376.