

GOAL

To pass legislation that will reduce and eliminate housing discrimination in Missouri

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

Fair Housing means all people have equal access to the housing of their choice that they can afford. Fair housing laws, passed as part of Civil Rights legislation, ensure this equal access.

While Missouri's housing Discrimination laws are currently housed under the Missouri Human Rights Act (MHRA), alongside employment and public accommodations laws, our state's housing discrimination statutes have not met the minimum requirements set by federal law since significant changes were made to the MHRA in 2017. This has resulted in fewer resources for fair housing enforcement, reduced retaliation protections for victims of discrimination, limited the available methods of proving discrimination, and capped the amount in awards for actual and punitive damages even in cases where discrimination can be proven through Missouri courts. Establishing the Missouri Fair Housing Act will increase equal housing opportunities and create healthier communities for all Missourians.

TALKING POINTS

- Fair housing is for everyone. No person in Missouri should have their right to rent or purchase the housing of their choice denied because of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, disability, familial status, or legal sources of income (such as housing vouchers, disability or veterans benefits, child support payments and more).
- Left unchecked, discrimination in our housing and financial markets wreaks irreparable harm on individuals, communities, and our state. Ineffective discrimination laws lead to increased occurrences of housing discrimination, housing insecurity and homelessness within our communities.
- Missouri's fair housing statutes do not meet the constitutional requirements set forth by federal law through the National Fair Housing Act. This has resulted in the loss of an estimated \$500,000 in federal funds for fair housing enforcement every year since 2017.
- Improving and enforcing fair housing provisions are key to helping our state reach many of its educational, health and workforce goals. Safe, affordable housing is the cornerstone of family security, stability and prosperity. It allows parents the ability to continue going to work, gives children a chance to succeed in school, and allows elderly family members the dignity and support to age in place.
- Establishing the Missouri Fair Housing Act will reduce discriminatory practices and barriers that impede access to the fair housing, bring our state back into compliance with federal law and enable more Missouri households to live in well-resourced, resilient, thriving communities with high-quality amenities such as well-performing schools; better paying jobs and transportation options; full service grocery stores; quality healthcare; and other vital services.

GOAL

To pass legislation that would enable communities state wide to establish community land banks.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

Missouri is short of 115,000 available and affordable housing units needed to house very low income households meanwhile there are 370,000 vacant homes. Empowering our communities with the option to establish community land banks that can assist in acquiring and redeveloping these properties will help our neighbors breathe new life into abandoned properties, and enable them to put them to their best use. It will grant community members the ability to address their community's specific needs, and create more vibrant and attractive communities for all to enjoy.

TALKING POINTS

- Land banks represent incredible opportunities to enable more Missouri communities to create appropriate local solutions to our statewide affordable housing crisis.
- Land banks empower communities to take control of vacant or blighted properties, preserving property rights and decision-making at the local level.
- Community land banks can stimulate economic growth by turning neglected properties into productive assets. This can lead to increased property values, job creation, and a stronger local tax base, promoting self-sufficiency and reducing the need for government subsidies.
- Community land banks can help prevent property abandonment and blight, preserving the value of neighboring properties and eliminate public health and safety hazards
- Community land banks can streamline the process of acquiring and redeveloping vacant properties, cutting through bureaucratic red tape, and reducing government inefficiency.
- Community land banks as a market-oriented solution that leverages private investment and encourages responsible property ownership, rather than relying solely on government subsidies.

GOAL

To increase Missouri's Housing Trust Fund's (MHTF) funding mechanism by raising the recording fee from \$3 to \$9 per deed transfer

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

Housing is foundational to the health and prosperity of Missouri families and communities. Adequate supply of safe, affordable housing is the key to many of Missouri's educational, health and economic goals.

The MHTF often receives requests for funding which are significantly above the amount of funding collected. This past year, not-for-profit organizations across Missouri requested over 10 million dollars in grants from the MHTF, many focused on rural South and Central parts of our state, which are often neglected by federal programs. Increasing the funding level could allow the MHTF to focus on the development of additional affordable housing units.

TALKING POINTS

- The MHTF has already made substantial impacts to local economies, increased funding will allow our communities to preserve and create quality, affordable housing, stimulate local economies, attract business, retain our skilled workforce and provide a stable foundation for families to reach their full potential.
- MHTF is the most flexible pot of money we have to create and preserve affordable housing and is best suited to fulfill funding urgent affordable housing needs from rural parts of our state, which are often neglected by federal programs.
- Safe, affordable housing is the cornerstone of family security, stability and prosperity. It allows parents the ability to continue going to work, gives children a chance to succeed in school, and allows elderly family members the dignity and support to age in place. All this is possible when families are able to afford a decent place to live.
- Increasing MHTF funding is fundamentally fiscally responsible. By raising the recording fee for deed transfers, we ensure that those directly involved in real estate transactions contribute to affordable housing without resorting to government expansion or tax hikes that would impact all Missourians.