



KC TENANTS

Tenant Bill of Rights Executive Summary

AS OF: October 31, 2019

KC Tenants: KC Tenants is an organization led by a multiracial, multigenerational base in Kansas City that has sought to build power among poor and working class tenants. KC Tenants is organizing to ensure that everyone in Kansas City has a safe, healthy, accessible, and truly affordable home. After making housing a key issue in the KCMO elections this spring, KC Tenants decided to run a campaign to win a Tenant Bill of Rights, written by the people who are closest to the problems.

Tenant Bill of Rights Package: KC Tenants drafted a Tenant Bill of Rights package, informed by lived experience and support by legal experts, to be passed by the KCMO Mayor and City Council. Tenants make up 48% of the City's residents. The Bill of Rights package aims to address the housing issues tenants face, especially related to affordability, access, health, and accountability. The proposed package includes a resolution and an ordinance. KC Tenants wants them passed together, and fully funded to ensure implementation and enforcement.

- 1. Tenant Bill of Rights:** This resolution affirms the Mayor and Council's commitment to enforcing existing tenant rights, and lists additional protections that will allow Kansas City's tenants more security in their housing. To ensure implementation and enforcement, the resolution directs the Council to establish an adequately-funded Division of Housing and Community Development under the Department of Neighborhoods and Housing Services (see below).
- 2. Division of Housing and Community Development & Healthy Homes:** This ordinance establishes a Rental Housing Assistance Unit within a new Division of Housing and Community Development to educate tenants of their rights and resources. The Unit will establish a Rental Housing Center, operate a Rental Housing Hotline, and publish a regularly-updated Tenant Bill of Rights Document enumerating legal protections. The Division is empowered to work with the Health Department to ensure freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, mental or physical disability, marital status, familial status, age sexual orientation or gender identity, gender expression, ethnic background, being a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, source of income, arrest and conviction history, or rental history.

The ordinance also amends the Healthy Homes Program to establish a Rental Housing Appeal Board overseeing Health Department landlord permits, as well as a relocation assistance fund for low-income tenants facing emergency moves. It empowers the Health Department to protect and enforce new tenant rights, including:

- Right to organize, collectively bargain, and protection from retaliation;
- No passing on permit fees to the tenant;
- Limits on security deposits;
- Written tenant consent and proper notice before landlord entry;
- Disclosures about past issues in the unit and a utilities estimate; and,
- Right to receive a Tenant Bill of Rights document before the start of each tenancy,