Testimony in favor of ordinance 231019

Advocates for Immigrant Rights and Reconciliation

My name is Itzel Vargas and I'm a community organizer with Advocates for Immigrant Rights and Reconciliation, we're a nonprofit organization here in Kansas City.

I am here testifying in support of banning source of income discrimination.

Working in immigration advocacy, we have seen that access to housing is the next main problem for the immigrant community after legal representation or questions. We get calls about housing all the time.

Last year, we were helping a family that had just arrived from Nicaragua, whose sponsor ended up being extremely violent and had an unsafe environment in their home, which was not ideal for the children to be around. We spent weeks trying to find housing that would accept them because of their lack of social security number and because the father got paid cash at the job he found.

This is the reality of the immigrant community which you are supposed to represent, whether they can vote or not, whether they speak your language or not, whether they have status or not. The reality is that Kansas City is home to over 150 thousand immigrants, we even have a whole new commission appointed by the mayor to make sure that immigrants are being included and truly welcomed in our city.

Well, City Council has the opportunity to make things right by banning source of income discrimination for good and by helping not only the immigrant community but also others, and making sure they're not houseless is one of the first steps to truly be welcoming.

Again, as an immigrant and as an advocate for this part of the community, I urge you to vote YES on ordinance 231019.

Thank you for your time and consideration.