From: Stephen Himes
To: Lucas, Quinton
Cc: Public Testimony
Subject: Testimony on Housing Incentives
Date: Monday, March 30, 2026 3:00:44 PM

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Dear Mayor Lucas and Members of the City Council,

My name is Stephen Himes, and I am a parent in the Kansas City Missouri School District and the 6th District. I am writing in opposition to the affordable housing changes included in Ordinance 260286.

I am a J.D. / Ed.D. who has worked not only in urban education for a longtime, in law school, I was the Chief of Staff for a Senator in Kansas who worked with her on the original STAR Bonds legislation. So I am intimately familiar with how tax incentives work (and don't work), and the biggest conclusion I've come to over the years is this:

Tax incentives to developers and corporations are not economic development. The most impact per dollar of investment comes from schools and affordable housing.

Reducing the “in-lieu-of” fee from $100,000 to $5,000 per unit would significantly weaken one of the city’s most important tools for ensuring that public incentives create real community benefit.

This change was introduced without meaningful input from the public or housing experts. That lack of transparency is deeply concerning—especially for a decision that will directly impact housing affordability and, in turn, KCPS students, families, and teachers.

When housing becomes unaffordable, families are pushed out, students are forced to change schools, and educators struggle to remain in the communities they serve. These are not abstract outcomes, they are real consequences of city policy decisions.

I urge you to remove the affordable housing provisions from this ordinance and allow time for proper public engagement and review.

Kansas City residents deserve transparency, accountability, and policies that put community first.

Believe me, if you remove these protections, the most mobilized advocacy organizations in this city will not forget it. It's legislation like this that is radicalizing voters against so-called "economic development" projects that are simply giveaways to political donors.
Steve

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Dr. Stephen Himes
J.D., University of Kansas (2007)
Ed.D., University of Missouri (2013)
Founder and Head of Academic Design, Knowledge Travels LLC
Missouri Real Estate Broker, Himes Homes LLC
Kansas City, Missouri