



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1716		DATE: 2/24/2026	
COMMITTEE: Economic Development			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: BRIAN GRACE		PHONE NUMBER: 573-230-9549	
REPRESENTING: MO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 117 MADISON ST.			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: CHANCE HEPOLA		PHONE NUMBER:	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 428 E CAPITOL AVE			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: DEREK WEBER		PHONE NUMBER: 660-341-3727	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: NORTHEAST MISSOURI REGIONAL PLANNING COMM		TITLE: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	
ADDRESS: 121 S. CECIL STREET			
CITY: MEMPHIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63555
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: EMMA SHANKLAND		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: HEALTH FORWARD FOUNDATION		TITLE: IMPACT STRATEGIST - POLICY	
ADDRESS: 2300 MAIN ST, #304			
CITY: KANSAS CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 64108
EMAIL: eshankland@healthforward.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 10:06 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Re: Health Forward Foundation support of House Bill 1716 - creating an opportunity for entities to establish a workforce housing investment fund

Chair Gallick and Members of the House Economic Development Committee:

On behalf of the Health Forward Foundation (Health Forward), I submit this letter of testimony in support of House Bill 1716 which would establish the “Rural Workforce Housing Investment Act” to support the development of safe, stable, and affordable housing for moderate-income households. Health Forward is a public health foundation committed to strengthening communities by advancing equitable access to health care and improving health outcomes.

Workforce housing is generally defined as housing affordable to households earning between 80% and 120% of area median income (1). These are often essential workers who earn too much to qualify for traditional housing assistance, yet not enough to comfortably afford market-rate rents or home prices, particularly as construction costs and housing demand rise. When these workers cannot find quality housing in the communities they serve, local employers struggle to recruit and retain staff, hospitals face workforce shortages, and economic growth stalls (2).

HB 1716 would increase access to safe, stable and affordable housing by supporting investment in new construction and substantial rehabilitation of workforce housing in rural communities with populations under 50,000. This investment is critical for rural Missouri communities that are facing an aging housing stock, higher per-unit development costs, and limited financing tools (3). The bill would help stabilize the local economy and positively impact health outcomes and the health of rural communities by increasing the supply of safe, stable, and affordable housing for moderate-income families.

Health Forward asks Members of the Committee to vote yes on HB 1716. Funding for safe, stable, and affordable housing can attract public and private investment that supports more jobs and lead to positive health outcomes while stimulating rural economies (4). Please contact eshankland@healthforward.org if you have any questions or would like additional resources.

Sincerely,

**Emma Shankland
Impact Strategist – Policy
Health Forward Foundation**

- (1) Ford, T. N., & Schuetz, J. (2019, October 29). Workforce housing and middle-income housing subsidies: A primer. Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/workforce-housing-and-middle-income-housing-subsidies-a-primer/>.**
- (2) Carmona, M. (2026, February 23). The invisible tax: How housing unaffordability stalls workforce development. National League of Cities.**
- (3) National Center for Healthy Housing & National Environmental Health Association. (2023). Rural communities and healthy housing primer (Publication). <https://nchh.org/resource-library/rural-communities-and-healthy-housing-primer.pdf>.**
- (4) National Low Income Housing Coalition. (n.d.). Why we care. <https://nlihc.org/explore-issues/why-we-care>.**



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ERICA ROBBINS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: EMPOWER MISSOURI		TITLE: AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY MANAGER	
ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 104900			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65110
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: JACK GAMBLE		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65181
EMAIL: jack@molobby.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 8:54 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: JASON ZAMKUS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-291-6180	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS; NORTHEAST MISSOURI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 1320 ELMERINE AVENUE			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL: jzamkus@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 8:05 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: JOSHUA MCKIM		PHONE NUMBER: 660-582-4490
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: NCED		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 408 NORTH MARKET		
CITY: MARYVILLE		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 64468
EMAIL: developer@nodaway.biz	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/19/2026 4:19 PM
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MATTHEW SMITH		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-2246	
REPRESENTING: ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF MISSOURI		TITLE: VP OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS	
ADDRESS: 3234 W TRUMAN BLVD			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL: msmith@aimo.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 7:45 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MICHELLE WOODS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 8:40 AM
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Local communities need support like this to be able to construct and provide housing opportunities for our workforce. As the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of St. Charles County, I see first hand the results of the lack of investment in housing stock for our workforce. Businesses struggle to keep their doors open without workers, schools can find teachers because they can't afford to live nearby and families are in an endless cycle of despair. Support of necessary housing infrastructure has wide reaching benefits such as stability, community engagement, increased educational outcomes and increased income thru career advancement-all of which strengthens communities and has generational and lasting benefits.



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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: MIKE SUTHERLAND		PHONE NUMBER: 636-297-5577
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 2722 EAST MCCARTY ST.		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: RICHARD SHEETS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-9134
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI MUNICIPAL LEAGUE		TITLE: ADVOCACY ADVISOR
ADDRESS: 1727 SOUTHRIDGE DRIVE		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65109
EMAIL: rsheets@mocities.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 9:07 AM

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The unavailability of housing for our workforce is problem throughout the state. HB 1716 will establish a program that will assist in improving our state's housing stock. Missouri Municipal League supports HB 1716.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCAT		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 11:20 PM
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I am Opposed to this Giveaways of Our Tax-Monies, especially when we NEED to cut \$2-Billion Dollars from Our Annual State Budget. We can NOT afford to hire three (3) additional Full-Time Employee and pay put \$30-Million Dollars Annually.



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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: LISA PANNETT		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: ARMORVINE		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SARAH BERRY		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 8:48 AM
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Legislative Notice:

The General Assembly is placed on notice that the creation of a non-reverting dedicated fund with discretionary allocation authority, transfer authority, and confidentiality provisions materially reduces fiscal oversight and increases litigation and audit exposure regarding uniform administration, equal access, and public-record transparency. Enactment without clearer allocation standards and oversight mechanisms may result in foreseeable legal and accountability challenges.