



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2898		DATE: 2/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: Local Government			
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: CHARLIE HINDERLITER		PHONE NUMBER: 314-576-0033	
REPRESENTING: ST. LOUIS REALTORS®		TITLE: CHIEF ADVOCACY OFFICER	
ADDRESS: 12777 OLIVE BLVD			
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63141
EMAIL: chinderliter@stlrealtors.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/9/2026 12:26 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

St. Louis REALTORS® strongly supports this legislation as a critical tool to bring vacant and abandoned properties back into productive use. Please repass this legislation (originally passed on HB 2062 in 2024).



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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: DAVID WINTON		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: ST. LOUIS COUNTY		TITLE:
ADDRESS: PO BOX 1805		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65102
EMAIL: david@wintonpolicygroup.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2026 9:27 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DIONNE JONES		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2026 7:50 AM	
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My name is Dionne Peoples-Jones and I am an alderperson in the city of Pine Lawn. We have hundreds of abandoned properties in a city of fewer than 3,000 residents. I know that the land bank would help our city by clearing the title for these properties and getting them renovated and back on the tax roll for St. Louis County and Pine Lawn. The Land Bank represents hope for revitalization within my city. Thank you.



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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:			
CITY: CAPE GIRARDEAU		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63703
EMAIL: erica@empowermissouri.org	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2026 6:14 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Date: February 11, 2026

To: Chairman Hinman and Members, Local Government Committee

From: Erica Robbins, Affordable Housing Policy Manager, Empower Missouri

Re: Support for HB 2898

Founded in 1901, Empower Missouri is the largest anti-poverty advocacy organization in the state. As part of our work, we organize a statewide Affordable Housing Coalition. This coalition is made up of individuals and organizations who are working to ensure every Missourian has access to safe, affordable, stable housing. On behalf of our staff, board, and coalition members, we are asking you to support HB 2898.

Data from our partners at the National Low Income Housing Coalition show 87% of very low income households in Missouri pay more than 30% of their income towards housing costs (1) which leaves very little in their pockets for medical care, food, childcare, and other expenses. At the end of each month, there is nothing left to save for an emergency, such as an unexpected medical bill, car repairs or unforeseen seasonal costs. In cases like these, we should consider that some households could be one such emergency away from homelessness.

Missouri also boasts over 324,667 vacant housing units according to an analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey data (2). Left uninhabited, these deserted properties often deteriorate, creating public health and safety hazards and impacting the vitality of our communities.

Due to there being no county in our state with an adequate supply of affordable housing, over 120,000 families in Missouri cannot afford to simply move to find more suitable homes because there simply is not enough available. Recent estimates show that a person earning minimum wage would need to work fifty-two hours a week to afford a one-bedroom rental (3). Land banks can help address our housing crisis in Missouri by obtaining these desolate properties and developing them into affordable housing opportunities, turning what were once empty and abandoned lots into warm and welcoming homes.

As of February 2024, nineteen states and Puerto Rico have passed land bank legislation, and there are currently over 350 land banks and land-banking programs across the United States (4), with four in Missouri, located in our larger metropolitan areas of St. Louis, Kansas City, Blue Springs, and Saint Joseph. These areas can attest that land banks are essential to community revitalization and

neighborhoods challenged by what to do with unoccupied real estate.

Land banks benefit rural communities as well as their larger urban counterparts by restoring abandoned properties to productive use. Since the pandemic, rural areas have continued to see a growth in population (5), creating the need for more affordable housing in these areas and an affordable streamlined path toward home ownership. HB 2898 has the potential to deeply impact rural areas by authorizing land banks in smaller towns and counties, providing more housing opportunities for our neighbors in these regions, and allowing unused land and structures to be transformed into areas of growth and development.

Land banks provide an economic boost to communities as well by increasing property values, collection of delinquent taxes, and stimulating job growth. When rehabilitating abandoned and blighted properties, Missouri counties and municipalities will be able to increase their affordable housing options while simultaneously decreasing their dependence on government funds and housing subsidies. Land banks allow communities to be the decision-makers regarding the unattended areas of their towns, keeping property rights and choices on what's best for their residents at the local level.

HB 2898 stands to benefit many Missouri counties and municipalities. We appreciate Representative Owen introducing this bill and encourage you to vote yes on HB 2898.

1 <https://nlihc.org/gap/state/mo>

2 <https://www.lendingtree.com/home/mortgage/vacancy-rates-study/>

3 <https://nlihc.org/oor/state/mo>

4 <https://communityprogress.org/resources/land-banks/national-land-bank-map/>

5

https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard_JCHS_The_State_of_the_Nations_Housing_2023.pdf



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: JASON ZAMKUS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-291-6180	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 1320 ELMERINE AVENUE			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL: jzamkus@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2026 9:03 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: LAURA HOLLOWAY		PHONE NUMBER: 573-635-9134	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI MUNICIPAL LEAGUE		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 1727 SOUTHRIDGE DR.			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: PAT KELLY		PHONE NUMBER: 314-726-4747
REPRESENTING: MUNICIPAL LEAGUE OF METRO STL		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 11911 DORSETT RD.		
CITY: MARYLAND HEIGHTS		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 63043
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2026 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: WILLIAM MARRS		PHONE NUMBER: 417-848-8561
REPRESENTING: CITY OF SPRINGFIELD		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 223 E CAPITOL AVE		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65101
EMAIL: govservicesjcmo@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2026 7:55 AM
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The City of Springfield remains very supportive of a state wide option for land bank. This is a valuable tool for redevelopment in communities with neglected housing.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2026 11:29 PM
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I am Opposed to County Land-Banks, there make-up. Land Banks tend to shell-games, fraud and embezzlement. Defeat this Bill!



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: LISA PANNETT		PHONE NUMBER:	
REPRESENTING: ARMORVINE		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2026 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: 2/5/2026 5:36 PM	
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House Bill 2898 is presented as a minor governance adjustment. It is not.

It is a quiet power shift over public land, executed through board restructuring, with insufficient safeguards and dangerously weak accountability.

Land bank agencies are not advisory bodies.

They control publicly held land, exercise authority over tax-delinquent and abandoned property, and directly influence housing access, redevelopment, and intergenerational wealth outcomes.

Any bill that alters who controls these entities must be treated as a high-risk governance bill, not housekeeping.

1. This Bill Dilutes Democratic Accountability

HB 2898 restructures boards of newly created land banks in a way that distances decision-making from voters. When boards governing public assets are insulated from elected oversight, the public loses meaningful recourse when decisions favor insiders, developers, or politically connected interests over communities.

Public land policy must remain answerable to the public. This bill moves in the opposite direction.

2. It Creates a Conflict-of-Interest Trap

Land banks sit at the intersection of real estate, development, tax enforcement, and public disposition of property. Any expansion or relaxation of board eligibility without iron-clad conflict-of-interest prohibitions invites abuse.

This bill does not adequately bar:
 real estate speculation,
 development self-dealing,
 revolving-door appointments,
 or influence laundering through “public-minded” appointees.

That is not hypothetical. That is how land capture happens.

3. It Enables Unequal and Opaque Land Control

By applying only to newly established land banks, HB 2898 creates a two-tier system where governance standards vary by timing, not principle. That invites forum shopping, uneven enforcement, and opaque local arrangements — especially in counties least equipped to monitor them.

Public land policy should be uniform, transparent, and predictable, not dependent on who got organized first.

4. This Bill Undermines Public Trust

Missouri already faces deep skepticism around land disposition, tax sales, and redevelopment favoritism. Passing a bill that expands authority while shrinking accountability signals to the public that oversight is optional when property values are on the line.

It is not.

**If the General Assembly wishes to strengthen land banks, it should do so by:
increasing transparency,
tightening conflict-of-interest rules,
reinforcing elected oversight,
and mandating public reporting.**

HB 2898 does none of these.

Instead, it concentrates power, blurs accountability, and exposes public land to private influence.

That is reason enough to vote NO.

Constitutional & Legal Footnotes

Missouri Constitution, Art. I, § 2 — All political power is vested in and derived from the people; governance of public assets must remain accountable to them.

Missouri Constitution, Art. III, § 1 — Legislative authority carries a duty to preserve transparency and prevent arbitrary delegation of public power.

42 U.S.C. § 1983 — When state-created entities act under color of law to deprive individuals of property rights without adequate safeguards, civil liability attaches.

Courts have consistently held that public entities controlling property must be governed with heightened procedural safeguards, not relaxed ones.