

Senator Yvonne Wilson Announces Passage of Bill Removing Racist Language From Housing Records



Sen. Yvonne Wilson

JEFFERSON CITY – State Sen. Yvonne Wilson, D-Kansas City, today announced Senate approval of legislation removing language from housing covenants that once prohibited certain groups from renting or buying homes.

Senate Bill 168 removes clauses from Kansas City housing association covenants intended to discriminate against blacks, Jews and other groups. Although these documents have long since been discredited, the language remains offensive and embarrassing.

These documents are a disgrace to the state of Missouri,” Wilson

said. “Although the documents are unenforceable, they are a reminder of a time in our history that needs to be left behind. This legislation allows us to do that.

More than 1,200 documents affecting thousands of homes in the Kansas City area contain the prejudicial clauses, which were common early in the 20th century. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled the covenants unenforceable in 1948, and the U.S. Fair Housing Act later deemed them illegal. However, the covenants were written in such a way to make eliminating them nearly impossible, even for the housing agencies themselves. Legislation is considered the quickest and easiest way to be rid of the language.

“My colleagues and I have heard widespread calls to remove the language, and we have responded,” Wilson said. “No longer will these documents stand as a relic of a troubled past. Today, the state of Missouri is moving on.”

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