

TO: Rep. Dan Hawkins and Members
House Committee on Health and Human Services

FR: Tom Laing, Executive Director, InterHab

RE: Support for HB 2682

Thank you, members of the committee, for this hearing on HB 2682, which our organization supports.

We believe that the State is best served in its provision of services and supports for persons with disabilities, when such services are consistently a reflection of the community and its elected officials, in both the executive and legislative branches. HB 2682 assures that can happen.

This bill will slow down the current planning to eliminate the home and community based service (HCBS) waiver for persons with IDD (along with all other waivers serving various persons with differing disabilities) to be replaced with a waiver which promises to serve everyone under one waiver.

We believe the current planning has been rushed, that the intentions are unclear, and that legislative oversight and approval is needed before such plans are proposed to the Federal government.

We have always supported every Administration's efforts to improve services offered in the home and community based services arena, and we believe that our members' contributions have been integral in the successful transition of this state away from an institutional-based service network to a community based network.

It is also important to know that the Legislature has historically been an influential force to spur previous administrations to "do the right things" in decisions relating to persons served by the HCBS programs.

The first major instance in which this process was short-circuited was KanCare, and the continuing problems and disruptions of KanCare can be directly linked to the haste which accompanied its changes.

Many legislators told us they agreed with our concerns regarding KanCare, but there was nothing they could do. The current push for waiver integration will have an even greater impact on persons we serve than KanCare, and HB 2682 provides something legislators CAN do to protect the persons we serve.

We strongly recommend that the plans to submit a proposal for waiver integration to the Federal government NOT be allowed to move forward before the 2017 Legislature has had a chance to review those plans and receive public comment.

HB 2682 will re-establish legislative authority in shaping the future of the Kansas HCBS programs.