

Dear Committee Members,

Several KDADS proposals would be devastating to many with disabilities, including my 33 year old son Chris who has Down Syndrome. Legislative intervention now will save the entire IDD system in Kansas from becoming chaos.

Chris struggled with mental health issues for 6 years after graduating school and on the waiting list to get funding. Being able to work at the Goodwill Industries of Kansas “Skill Development Adult Day Program” has been life changing, providing the structure he flourished in during his school years. Chris even received the 2022 Achiever of the Year Award. His work environment also helped with independence, allowing Chris to successfully move into a residential services setting, which he proudly calls his apartment.

KDADS “Unbundling” proposal would allow Chris just 6 more months working at Goodwill. Because of his lower skill level, he would then be deemed unemployable in the “community”, and be let go.

Businesses enter into job contracts with Goodwill SPECIFICALLY so individuals like Chris can experience employment. Chris loves and is proud of his job and above minimum wage paycheck. Unbundling is basically saying the job you’re so proud of doesn’t matter because it’s not out in the “community”.

Chris leaving his apartment IS going out in the community. He is going to his workplace and should be viewed the same as anyone without a disability going to their workplace. He is surrounded by co-workers, supervisors and managers - and should be viewed the same as anyone without a disability at their workplace. In fact, Chris and a Goodwill Marketing Specialist were friends in school and both graduated in 2009 from Maize High. They now work in the same Goodwill building. That should be considered a great success story.

KDADS defends the change as being “more personalized and flexible, tailored to individual needs and goals and enhance choice”. It literally does the exact opposite and eliminates the choices that individuals have already made and are experiencing success.

Please support House Bill 2240 requiring legislative approval of any proposed changes to the IDD system.

Respectfully,
Pat Leon, Wichita

