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# Topeka Independent Living Resource Center

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Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

Jean K. Schodorf, Chair

Presented by Mike Oxford, Executive Director

Topeka Independent Living Resource Center

March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012

The Topeka Independent Living Resource Center (TILRC) is a civil and human rights organization. Our mission is to advocate for justice, equality and essential services for a fully integrated and accessible society for all people with disabilities. TILRC has been providing cross-age, cross-disability advocacy and services, including policy advocacy aimed at eliminating barriers to independent living, for over 30 years to people with disabilities across the state of Kansas. Our agency believes that people with disabilities ought to enjoy the same freedoms and opportunities as our non-disabled peers. Put simply, students with disabilities should be integrated with their non-disabled peers to maximum extent possible.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. I know you have a packed schedule so I will be extra brief and share just one good reason this bill should be passed out of committee favorably.

Please allow me to introduce Trey Morgan. I first met Trey when he was a summer intern for our summertime youth employment and training program. His story is appalling and graphically points to the need for this legislation to become law. Trey was going to come and testify with me, but he became very uneasy about talking in front of a committee and decided not to come. He did ask that I share his remarks. They are below:

*During high school I constantly lost out on education because the teacher would constantly send me to the "safe room" which was a storage closet. During this time often the teacher would be teaching the children about a new math formula or something else related to the class. I would be stuck in the "safe room" not learning anything new. I wasn't allowed to leave the room either. My I.E.P also stated it was a room to cool down in and not to be used for punishment. But that didn't stop the teachers for using it as a form of punishment.*

*I still feel very low and bad about being treated this way. The teachers would just put me in the room and leave me way past any "cooling off" period. They never even checked to see if I had "cooled". Why did I have to miss out on learning? To the teachers I was just too much of a problem so they just put me out of their hair. They made me feel like I wasn't worth teaching.*

*Trey Morgan*

There are too many stories just like this one, or worse, all over the state. Please report HB 2444 favorable for passage.

Senate Education Committee

Date: 3-8-12

Attachment # 4

*Advocacy and services provided by and for people with disabilities.*