

Testimony in Favor of SB 444
Senate Ways and Means Committee
Natalie S. Bright

March 9, 2012

Chairman McGinn and honorable committee members,

I am Natalie Bright and I am appearing before you on behalf of my client, the Coalition for Opportunity. For those not familiar with the Coalition for Opportunity, it is a group of Kansas businesses who employ the blind and disabled and sell products within the Kansas State Use Law program. Attached is a list of our members, their mission and the products they sell in the State Use Law Program.

The purpose of the SUL is to provide a market for the goods and services offered by disabled and blind. I have worked with many of you for several years to grow and improve the Kansas State Use Law and despite the Coalition's steadfast efforts to grow the SUL program through traditional SUL sales the program has remained fairly stagnant in growth. In addition, disabled Kansans continue to suffer from the highest unemployment rate.

This session, with the assistance of Representative Crum, SB 444 has been drafted as an incentive to engage the private sector to engage in the hiring of disabled Kansans as well as purchase goods and services from Kansas SUL vendors. Despite the many benefits provided by SUL programs, creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities is difficult and not the responsibility of any one person or entity. If private and public partners can work together, the benefits received are great. As such, I am pleased to stand before you in support of SB 444 as we believe its passage will be positive for improving the employment rate for disabled Kansans by bringing additional opportunities for disabled Kansans.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you in favor of SB 444. I will stand for questions.

COALITION FOR OPPORTUNITY

Business Technology Career Opportunities (BTCO) Mission: An imaging and technology solutions company, providing superior customer services through a fully integrated workforce that promotes technical careers for people of all abilities. ***SUL service provided is document imaging.***

Cartridge King Mission: To provides services to individuals with disabilities by promoting community inclusion, and employment opportunities with the maximum level of independence and dignity. ***SUL product sold is new and remanufactured toner cartridges.***

Center Industries Corporation Mission: Manufacturing entity which provides dignified employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities as members of a fully integrated work force. ***SUL products include hang tags, decals and inventory decals.***

Envision Mission: To enhance the personal independence of individuals whose blindness or low vision, often accompanied by other disabilities that impacts their opportunities for employment, success, and integration into community life. ***SUL products sold include can liners, seal closure bags, merchandising bags wiping towels, pens, office supplies and printing services.***

Goodwill Industries Mission: Providing employment opportunities, vocational training and rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. ***SUL products sold include General Purpose Safety Vests and Professional Series Safety Vests (ANSI/ISO).***

KETCH Mission: To promote independence to persons with disabilities through innovative learning experiences that support individuals' choices for working, living and playing in their community. ***SUL products include binders, air filters and safety products.***

TARC Mission: Providing employment opportunities and work related experiences for persons with developmental disabilities. ***SUL products include document destruction services, all- purpose mailing services, custodial Services***

TECH Mission: TECH is committed to assisting individuals with disabilities of all ages to live full and productive lives through advocacy, education, and quality supports. ***SUL products include Custodial / Janitorial Services.***