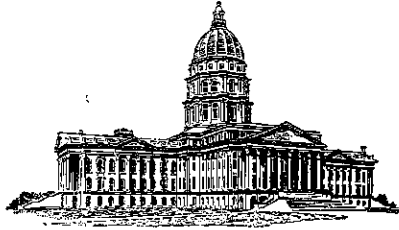


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BLAINE FINCH
59TH DISTRICT

February 16, 2016

**Testimony in Support of HB 2626 to the House Taxation Committee
Chairman Kleeb, Vice Chair Sullentrop, Ranking Member Sawyer**

Honorable Chairman and Members of the Committee:

It is my honor to appear before your committee in support of HB 2626, the Tax Weight Loss Act. This idea came from Mr. Chris Patton, the executive director of COF Training Services. COF stands for Coffee Osage Franklin and has been the CDDO (Community Developmental Disability Organization) in this area for decades.

COF has for years allowed their consumers to perform piece work on behalf of private industry. Examples have included the assembly of airline oxygen masks and assembly of boxes for Wal-Mart distribution facilities. This process filled a demand for the business and provided a meaningful opportunity for members of the I/DD (Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities) community to make positive contributions through work. We all know the sense of purpose and meaning that work provides to life.

HB 2626 builds on the COF model to encourage the business community to make work available to those currently on public assistance. When they do, they receive tax credits and other incentives that reward their participation. The public at large receives a savings as people on public assistance are moved to wage earning work and economic self-sufficiency. The "tax weight" that is lost due to decreases in public assistance payments is shared with industry thorough incentives but also retains significant savings for the state and its people.

Please understand that HB 2626 is a concept. While the entire bill can be adopted and lead to positive changes, it can also be used as a starting point for further refinement or even the creation of pilot programs so the concept can be fully vetted. HB 2626 represents a sea change in the way we move people from assistance to success, but it is an idea that has merit and deserves real consideration. I hope this committee will provide that.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and will be happy to stand for questions.