



Topeka Independent Living Resource Center

785-233-4572 V/TTY • FAX 785-233-1561 • TOLL FREE 1-800-443-2207
501 SW Jackson Street • Suite 100 • Topeka, KS 66603-3300

March 14, 2017

House Committee on Commerce, Labor & Economic Development
Representative Les Mason, Chair

Testimony in Opposition to HB 2353 & HB 2356

Mike Oxford, Exec. Dir.

Topeka Independent Living Resource Center

Topeka, KS 66603

785.233.4572

tilrc@tilrc.org

The Topeka Independent Living Resource Center (TILRC) is a federally funded Center for Independent Living (CIL) and 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 for over 30 years to people with disabilities. TILRC is owned, managed and operated by people with disabilities.

Our agency is committed to maximizing the independence and community integration of people with disabilities by assuring that people with disabilities have competitive, integrated employment opportunities, meaning that at least minimum wage must be paid for work that is not “sheltered” or in an enclave (takes place in a regular job setting made up of both disabled and non-disabled workers). TILRC believes that the principles of “Employment First” should guide employment related policies both statewide and federally.

House Bill 2353 would allow holders of “14c” certificates to be qualified vendors for purposes of bidding on state contracts. “14c” is a designation by the federal government that allows “sheltered” or enclave employers of people with disabilities to pay less than minimum wage. Such operations should no longer be encouraged or subsidized by the State. Instead, employment options that encourage competitive, integrated employment should be the focus of attention.

House Bill 2356 would allow certified businesses to subcontract with qualified vendors that hold “14c” certificates and that pay subminimum wages in segregated, sheltered settings. This is contrary to “Employment First” principles that should be driving Kansas policy as it relates to employment of people with disabilities. The focus should be forward looking to competitive, integrated employment and not codifying and subsidizing outmoded, subminimum wage, segregated activities.

For the reasons outlined, above, Topeka Independent Living Resource Center does not support these bills.

Advocacy and services provided by and for people with disabilities.