



2107 Industrial Dr., McPherson, KS 67460, P: 620-241-6693 F: 620-241-6699 www.mcds-ks.org

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March 17<sup>th</sup> 2017

Honorable Representative Les Mason  
Chairperson  
Kansas House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development  
Kansas State Capital Building  
Room 112-N  
300 SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Topeka, Ks. 66612

RE: HB 2356

Dear Representative Mason and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide both oral and written testimony regarding HB 2356. I represent Multi Community Diversified Services a community service organization that has provided services to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities for over 42 years. I also represent Cartridge King of Kansas, a separate company that was created over 22 years ago to provide employment to persons with significant disabilities in an environment that offers supports that they may not find in a typical community job placement.

The Bidders Preference law was enacted to provide an incentive for companies that bid on state contracts to do business with companies that provide employment to the disabled. This included "Certified Vendors" companies that pay minimum wage or better and provide benefits to their employees both disabled and non-disabled and "Qualified Vendors" companies that provide employment to blind or severely disabled employees under the State Use Law K.S.A 75-3317 some who have Department of Labor Certificate 14(c) certificates.

As an employer of persons with disabilities I have both a sub minimum wage 14(c) certificate at MCDS and at Cartridge King of Kansas pay minimum wage or better and provide a health insurance. I have found that a 14(c) program to be a very beneficial tool in the employment "toolbox". The 14(c) program is a proportional system where disabled employees can choose to work at their own pace and at MCDS are guaranteed a job should they choose one. The 14(c) relies on the commercial market for support i.e. you make one widget, I sell one widget and I pay you for one widget. Should I be required to pay the difference between the one widget and minimum wage I would need a substantial subsidy from the state or federal government to make up the difference or would be forced to eliminate my 14(c) program and the jobs that it provides. Keep in mind that should persons working under our 14(c) program be productive they will typically make well above minimum wage.

MCDS makes significant accommodations to provide an environment where the person can be as productive as their disability allows. One of the substantial differences between our 14(c)



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program and competitive integrated employment is that should the individual's disability affect their job, be it a challenging behavior or lack of interest in working on a particular day, they get their job back should they choose to work on another day. These are accommodations not found in community employment and frankly are some of the reasons that long term community employment is extremely difficult to retain for many of those we serve. We have found that getting the job in the community is typically not the problem it is keeping the job in the community that is the challenge.

While I understand the concern surrounding the 14(c) programs, I cannot and do not support eliminating them outright or taking away incentives that help these programs provide employment opportunities to the disabled. They should continue to be a choice for persons with disabilities. HB 2356 should not eliminate 14(c) programs from eligibility for the Bidders Preference law either directly or through the elimination of State Use Vendors under K.S.A 75-3317.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter and for your service in the Kansas House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

Doug Wisby  
President/CEO  
MCDS/Cartridge King of Kansas