



EQUALITY ♦ LAW ♦ JUSTICE

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Testimony in Support of HB 2307
House Federal and State Affairs
March 21, 2017

Chairman Barker and members of the committee:

My name is Mike Burgess. I am the Director of Policy & Outreach at the Disability Rights Center of Kansas (DRC). DRC is a public interest legal advocacy organization that is part of a national network of federally mandated organizations empowered to advocate for Kansans with disabilities. DRC is the officially designated protection and advocacy system in Kansas. DRC is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, organizationally independent of state government and whose sole interest is the protection of the legal rights of Kansans with disabilities.

DRC would like to thank you for the opportunity to offer our support for HB 2307 (Simon's Law).

Disability is a natural part of the human condition. It is not to be feared, ridiculed, or pitied. It should not be looked down upon or have someone wondering why anyone want to live like that.

What is a life worth living? That is not a question that should be answered by a health care provider. It should be exclusively left to wishes of the patient or as in this case the parents or legal decision makers.

While we support the bill before you, we also support the compromise language that recently passed the Senate in Substitute for SB 85.

Unfortunately in statute and policy, we often refer to "the disabled," which focuses on the wrong aspect of a person and dehumanizes them a little bit. My tip for the day is to always use person-first language where you put the person before their diagnosis. When you refer to someone with a disability, say a "person with a disability". At the root of it all is the person.

I would urge you to please adopt the compromise language from Substitute for SB 85.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to any questions either now or at the appropriate time.