



EQUALITY ♦ LAW ♦ JUSTICE

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**Proponent Testimony HB 2356**  
**Senate Ways and Means Committee**  
**April 5, 2017**

**Chair McGinn 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for HB 2356.

The bill contains several changes that will make the bidder preference program more workable for certified businesses.

Several disability groups along with an individual with a disability testified in the House committee about how the existing bidder preference program discriminates against certain types of disabilities.

Thankfully, the House committee amendment fixes this. Under the bill now, a certified business will be able to hire any Kansan who is an individual with a disability pursuant to the disability standards established by the social security administration as determined by the Kansas disability determination services under the Kansas department for children and families.

People with mental illness over the age of 21 and many others who have a physical or mental impairment which constitutes a substantial barrier to employment will be able to be hired by a certified business under the bill.

With that change now in the bill, I am pleased to appear before you as a proponent to the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to support the changes contained in HB 2356. I would be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.