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*LIGHTING THE WAY FOR OUR COMMUNITY*

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TO: House Committee on Commerce, Labor, Economic Development

ATTN: Rep. Sean Tarwater, Chair

FROM: John Coen, President/CEO Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce

RE: HB 2416 – Targeted Employment Act

DATE: February 6, 2020

On behalf of the 350 business members of the Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB 2416** – Targeted Employment Act.

Shortages of workforce is the number one issue facing Ottawa area employers...as it is with all Kansas industries and businesses. In order for Kansas businesses to remain competitive and sustainable, all viable workforces need to be pursued and empowered to receive gainful employment. While record low unemployment numbers are a good economic indicator, it forces employers to be creative in looking at all available options to fill workforce needs. HB 2416 does exactly that.

HB 2416 offers targeted employment tax credit for businesses that employ individuals with physical or intellectual disabilities in an integrated workforce. The incentives will supplement the work COF (Coffey, Osage, Franklin Counties) Training Services provides locally to developmentally disabled individuals. Currently COF implements a wide-range of services to support Franklin County residents and families who are impacted by intellectual and developmental disabilities. HB 2416 will give COF another tool to help individuals find and keep gainful employment while at the same time helping employers fill a workforce need.

This is a significant piece of legislation which deals directly with our responsibility as a state and citizens to aid those unable to care for themselves. With unemployment near 80% for individuals with developmental disabilities we have the obligation to do more.

We encourage your support for HB 2416.