



LAURA KELLY, Governor • KATHY KECK, Chairperson • STEVE GIEBER, Executive Director

“To ensure the opportunity to make choices regarding participation in society and quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities”

Feb 6, 2020

Re: [Neutral testimony on HB 2416](#)

Chair Tarwater and members of the Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee:

I am Steve Gieber, Executive Director of the Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities (KCDD). The Council is made up of self-advocates, family members, state agencies, and our partners identified in the Federal Developmental Disabilities Act. The Council is to advise policy makers on issues impacting people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and their families. While the Council agrees that employment is a very important choice, this bill would not be consistent our Federal Law or Kansas Employment First Law which supports individual integrated competitive employment. The Council believes that the amendments offered by DRC will fix these issues in HB 2416 and we would fully support it with those amendments.

I spent the first 33 years of my career in the disability field helping people be productive and either become employed or be in training that would lead to employment. The first 15 years it was much easier because we had flexible funding streams that we could match to the individual's needs. Then we decided to take all state general funds and match them with Medicaid waiver funding so that we could have more funding. We lost the flexibility of providing what each person needed with the increased regulations. This has led to fewer people with disabilities becoming employed.

I believe HB 2416 is one of the solutions that would have helped to encouraging an employer to select the candidate I was representing when I was working in central Kansas helping people with disabilities get jobs. Even back then it occurred to me that it cost tax payers and businesses more to support people that wanted to work but weren't able to than it would cost to just have a simple incentive for the employer to employ them. The right tax credit makes it more feasible for the business to hire the individual. Not only do we avoid the cost, we gain the productivity of the individual. The individual becomes a productive member of society and the business gains the talent and productivity of the individual. This is a win-win with the solution at the local level and everyone moving toward greater independence.

The Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities supports HB 2416 with the amendments proposed by the Disability Rights Center in their testimony.

I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Steve Gieber
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