



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”*

March 6, 2020

RE: Proponent House Bill 2701

Testimony by: Jeff Schroeder, Public Policy Coordinator
Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities

Chairman Tarwarter and members of the House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to your committee today.

The Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities (KCDD) would like to express our support of House Bill 2701, providing an employment preference for persons with a disability for state government positions.

Kansas was the first state in the nation to implement an employment first initiative, and pass in to law on July 1, 2011 the Kansas Employment First Initiative Act declaring that it is the policy of the state of Kansas that competitive and integrated employment shall be considered its first option when serving persons with disabilities who are of working age to obtain employment. Requiring all state agencies to follow this policy and ensure that it is effectively implemented in their programs and services.

“While there is little opposition to the goals of Kansas’ Employment First law, nothing has led to real, measurable progress since its implementation. In spite of a wide variety of initiatives implemented across state agencies that focus on improving competitive, integrated employment outcomes for people with disabilities, there is still much work needed to make systematic and measurable progress.” – Employment Systems Change Coalition report published in 2018.

We believe that HB2701 provides an opportunity for Kansas to lead by example and promote the hiring of qualified individuals with disabilities for state employment. By this example, Kansas will show its understanding that hiring and retaining a diverse staff of highly qualified employees, which include individuals with disabilities, makes significant contributions to the State’s success and might also encourage other employers to follow in the State’s footsteps and increase the overall employment of individuals with disabilities in Kansas which will benefit all Kansans.

Thank you.

Jeff Schroeder, Public Policy Coordinator
Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities