

Senate Committee on Commerce
February 20, 2019
Testimony in Favor of HB 2044

Chair Lynn and Honorable Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the Coalition for Opportunity, a group comprised of organizations who directly employ persons with disabilities and participate in the Kansas State Use Law program. Despite the concerted efforts of the Coalition members, Kansans with disabilities are struggling to find work and live economically stable, independent lives because there is a lack of competitive employment opportunities. As such, the members of the Coalition for Opportunity stand in strong support of HB 2044 because they believe it will incent private sector employers to do business with our members and help expand competitive work opportunities for disabled Kansans.

Specifically, HB 2044 proposes an income tax credit for taxpayers who purchase certain goods and services from qualified vendors who provide employment for blind or disabled individuals. The tax credit is capped at \$5 million for 5 years and is nonrefundable. If passed, our members believe HB 2044 will be one of the most significant workforce development tools available to incent disabled employment.

HB 2044 is the sister bill to SB 26, which this committee held a hearing on earlier this session. The House passed HB 2044 via consent calendar by a vote of 115-0. In addition, last year the same language set out in HB 2416 passed the House by a vote of 122-0, was amended into two bills as floor votes by the Senate via voice vote and were components of the Mega tax bill that passed the Senate 21-19 but ultimately failed to pass the House.

On behalf of the members of the Coalition for Opportunity, I respectfully request your support of HB 2044. I will stand for questions.