

TARC

Service. Support. Advocacy.

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01-2019

February 20, 2019

To: Senate Commerce Committee
From: Shelby Fry, TARC Industries/Employment Services Director and
Chair for the Kansas State Use Law Committee
Re: Written Testimony in Support of HB 2044 and Support of Kansas Disability Work
Programs

TARC is a not-for-profit organization established in 1954 that provides services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities within Shawnee County. At TARC Industries/Employment Services (TIES), the work training, job coaching, and job placement division of TARC, we strive to provide opportunities for those with disabilities to earn income either through direct community job placement, or at our work training program at TARC Industries.

As a current State Use Law vendor TARC provides Document Destruction, Mail Services, and Janitorial services within Shawnee County. In addition to these work training programs, TARC is also a sub-contractor for many local and national businesses. TARC is a current holder of a 14C certificate as authorized by the Department of Labor. As a certificate holder, TARC is authorized to pay individuals based on their individual work productivity. This distinction is important, as it allows TARC to pay work training wages based on personal productivity to the over 100 individuals participating in this program. Without this certificate, all individuals participating at TIES would have to be paid an hourly wage, making the program financially not viable.

As you are aware, the discussion continues, both in our State and on the national level, regarding how best to provide services to individuals with intellectual disabilities. The future of 14C certificate holders continues to be at risk as the call for community employment for all individuals, regardless of disability or severity, continues unabated. **Now, more than ever, it is important for disability providers to have within their work training arsenal a full array of work programs. This should include the proposed legislation outlined in HB 2044, continuation of the 14C certificate program and all possible incentives that can be given to the business community to invest and employ individuals with disabilities.**

TARC's Mission

TARC enhances the lives of people affected by intellectual, developmental and related disabilities through commitment to excellence in service, support and advocacy.

When it comes to employment services for individuals with disabilities it is important to remember that a one-size-fits-all approach is not useful and will not have the desired impact, anymore that stating that regardless of severity all individuals with disabilities should be working in their community. This type of hyperbole leads to sweeping changes to the current support structure, that will ultimately not have the desired effect, but instead lead to individuals not working at all. Instead, states and the federal government should look towards innovative opportunities that give options to people, while keeping available the current menu of services.

Finally, I want to share with you a story about Eddie. Eddie has been receiving work training services at TIES for many years. Eddie comes to our program with a brief case, filled to bursting, while wearing business attire. Eddie does not read or write, but copies pages of words each day from magazines he has brought in his brief case. He considers this his “work”. For a few hours each day we can convince Eddie to put away his papers and work on a contract that involves collating paper and inserting it into an envelope in his work area.

Eddie is meticulous in his work. He stops frequently to check his brief case or to discuss his family’s origins in France. He is very proud to say his family originated in France and discusses this with all who meet him. Although encouraged by his family and support staff, Eddie will not be rushed. Eddie will not leave his brief case at home, Eddie will not easily accept feedback. When Eddie feels rushed or pushed, he will refuse to cooperate and will not move. Eddie works at his work training program, he has plentiful work options available to him, he however picks and chooses what he will/will not participate in. Bluntly, Eddie would not be successful in the community. Eddie would not be allowed to pick and choose work tasks, work infrequently, stage “sit-ins” if he was mad at his boss, or refuse to cooperate with co-workers. It is for this very reason that 14C certificate holders exists.

On behalf of TARC, I thank you for your continued support of organizations like TARC and the ability to provide written testimony to you today.

Sincerely,

Shelby Fry
TARC Industries/Employment Services Director