

February 3, 2022

Testimony in support of HB2219 before the Senate

Chairman Rep. Renee Erickson
Vice Chairman Re. Mark Steffen
Ranking Member Rep. Tom Holland

Honorable Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Committee

My name is Craig Evans and I am the president of the Kansas-based company Integrated Employment Enterprises. Integrated Employment Enterprises specializes in light manufacturing and assembly. We work with Kansas companies to provide a reliable and effective labor force to meet their manufacturing needs.

Integrated Employment Enterprises looks to provide employment to those that have experienced chronic unemployment or under employment.

Through initial and continuous assessment, we work with all employees, those with and without disabilities. We look at environmental modifications, schedule modifications, and task modifications for our employees.

There are a lot of Kansans with documented diagnoses that need additional accommodations at their place of work. There are also a lot of Kansans that do not have any formalized diagnosis but still would need the assistance and benefit of additional workplace accommodations in order to be successful at acquiring and retaining a job.

Integrated Employment Enterprises works to provide employment for those Kansans.

Integrated Employment Enterprises is attempting to tap into an untapped labor force. In a time of drastic labor shortage, this is an area that needs to be highlighted.

However, regardless of labor shortages, employers have been hesitant to hire individuals with disabilities and those that need additional accommodations.

I believe that incentivizing these employers is what it is going to take for them to try something different.

By investing in these employers, we increase the likelihood that they will invest in their employees.

In addition to helping Kansas companies find and retain reliable labor, HB 2219 would also help narrow the gap between the employment rate of Kansans with disabilities and that of Kansans without disabilities. Currently, approximately 84% of all working age non-disabled Kansans work. Compare that to the 45% of disabled Kansans that are working.

At only 45%, that leaves a massive number of Kansas labor needing to be tapped into to support our Kansas companies.

Additionally, HB2219 could have a momentous effect on the amount of Medicaid distributed to unemployed and under employed Kansans with disabilities.

To this date, there is only one way for a person to lower their reliance on government subsidies and that is to work and make an earned income.

The only way that these disabled Kansans can lower their reliance on government aid is to be hired and start earning an hourly income.

HB2219 incentivizes Kansas employers for every hour that they contribute to this model.

I support HB2219 because it supports our Kansans and our Kansas companies.