

Written Testimony in Opposition to HB2275

Hello, my name is Colin Olenick. I am the Legislative Liaison for the Self Advocacy Coalition of Kansas. I would like to talk to you today about Employment First and why this bill would take us backwards.

Since 2011, Kansas has made a commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities have the opportunity to work in integrated settings. The bill before you today would take us backwards by allowing businesses to operate sheltered workshops and receive tax credits. According to the bill only 30% of a business must be "integrated" leaving 70% of employees unaffected by the requirement of the bill. This allows businesses to be required to pay 30% of employees with disabilities minimum wage while the other 70% could be paid sub-minimum wages. This undermines the principle of equal pay for equal work and says that only people they determine to be worthy of a full minimum wage should be able to be working out in the community.

I respectfully oppose this legislation and say that our tax dollars and any tax benefits should be going towards full integrated employment.