

Testimony in Support of HB 2253

Submitted by Shanna Groves, KCDHH Board Member and Kansas Resident

Kansans with disabilities should have employment preference to government positions, while given access to reasonable accommodations essential to making the positions equitable to them. Let my workplace experience be an example of why the passing of HB 2253 is so necessary.

As a person with hearing loss and a former special education teacher for the state of Kansas, there was no such law to provide employment preference when I began applying for jobs. I was also not made aware of reasonable accommodations when I applied for various teaching positions. After being hired as a teacher, this put an enormous burden on my shoulders to prove that I was capable of performing all the responsibilities of the job, while advocating for access to appropriate workplace accommodations. According to [Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), regulations require that covered federal contractors and subcontractors take proactive steps to recruit and retain workers with disabilities. Since this is a requirement for businesses that work with the government, it is important that state government positions be disability-inclusive to set this example for other businesses.

One of the concerns may be the cost of providing accommodations to employees with disabilities. According to the [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#), employers participating in the annual JAN survey reported a high percentage (56%) of accommodations cost nothing to implement (\$0), while the rest of the accommodations made had a typical cost of \$500. The \$500 cost has been consistent across the many years of the JAN survey research findings.

Research shows that people with disabilities have higher levels of problem-solving skills, memory and dependability. [Harvard Business Review](#) conducted research that revealed adults with various disabilities, such as autism or other types of neurodiversity, may possess higher-than-average abilities in memory, mathematics and pattern recognition. Employees with intellectual disabilities, according to research from the [Institute for Corporate Productivity](#), are rated high for their dependability (89%), engagement (88%), integration with co-workers (87%) and attendance (84%).

HB 2253 would allow Kansans with disabilities applying for government positions to have employment preference because of their disabilities as well as the guarantee that reasonable accommodations are provided to successfully do their jobs. For all of the reasons I have included in my statement, it makes logical sense to consider the benefits of passing HB 2253.