



Topeka Independent Living Resource Center

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Testimony Presented to the House Health and Human Services Committee
Proposing to Strike the Reporting Requirements for Disability Status in SB 528

By

Ami Hyten, Assistant Executive Director

Dear Chairperson Morrison and Committee Members,

The Topeka Independent Living Resource Center (TILRC) is a civil and human rights organization. Our mission is to advocate for justice, equality and essential services for a fully integrated and accessible society for all people with disabilities. TILRC has been providing cross-age, cross-disability advocacy and services for over 25 years to people across the state of Kansas.

TILRC joins with the Disability Rights Center (DRC) and other Kansas disability organizations in our challenge to the discriminatory inquiry which is being proposed as part of the reporting requirements of SB 528. We echo the DRC's questions with respect to the reporting requirements for people with disabilities contained in SB 528.

Inquiry into the existence, nature or severity of disability is prohibited by federal law in both employment and in housing. (*See 42 U.S.C. 12111 – 12117 and 42 USC 3601 et seq.*) We believe that this prohibition is critical to supporting the civil and human rights of people with disabilities, to address the historical isolation, segregation and discrimination identified as in need of remediation in the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Americans with Disabilities Act recognized that *"individuals with disabilities are a discrete and insular minority who have been faced with restrictions and limitations, subjected to a history of purposeful unequal treatment, . . . based on characteristics that are beyond the control of such individuals and resulting from stereotypic assumptions not truly indicative of the individual ability of such individuals to participate in, and contribute to, society;"* (42 U.S.C. 12101(a)(7)). It is our belief that categorizing and stereotyping people on the basis of a disability diagnosis unnecessarily perpetuates the historical restrictions, limitations, and inequities experienced by people who are treated as "labels" rather than as brothers and sisters. We encourage this committee to follow the federal precedent of restricted inquiry into housing and employment issues, by striking the disability status reporting requirements from SB 528.

Thank you for your time and commitment to this critical issue of human and civil rights.

Advocacy and services provided by and for people with disabilities.