



March 7, 2019

TO: Senator Carolyn McGinn and Members,
Ways and Means Committee

FR: Matt Fletcher, Executive Director

RE: SB 210

Chairperson McGinn and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 210. InterHab's membership includes a number of developmental disability community service providers that joined KPERS several years ago. At the time, doing so enabled those providers to offer benefits to their employees in a manner they could not previously afford to do.

However, during the next several years, KPERS-related costs rose and the I/DD community service network remained significantly underfunded. The result is an unsustainable burden to providers within the KPERS system. A solution is required that will help to alleviate the fiscal pressure that I/DD providers within KPERS now feel.

Organizations that provide community-based services to Kansans with intellectual and developmental disabilities are facing a workforce crisis in their most vital positions – direct support professionals (DSPs) who provide critical care on a daily basis. Without legislative action, this crisis will grow to impact the I/DD network's ability to provide services. I/DD providers are hard pressed to offer competitive wages that are comparable to entry-level fast food restaurants in their communities. This workforce crisis causes a great financial pressure on I/DD providers due to increased overtime and costs associated with recruiting and training for these positions.

SB 210 seeks to provide a measure of relief to I/DD providers within KPERS by allowing those providers to delay the entry of new direct-care level employees by two years, which will prevent the costs associated with a large number of workers in these positions who leave employment long before the two-year mark. This will relieve significant enrollment-related costs while enabling I/DD providers within KPERS to still continue offering this benefit.

The members of InterHab support efforts such as those contained in SB 210 to assist I/DD service providers with rising operational costs. As such, we urge support of SB 210 and ask that you give the bill favorable consideration.