

House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development  
Proponent Testimony on HB 2443  
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Thank you, Chairman Tarwater and members of the committee, for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 2443. I am Martha Gabehart, Executive Director of the Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns (KCDC). The Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns makes recommendations for changes to laws, regulations and programs that help Kansans with disabilities be active citizens in their communities.

HB 2443 establishes the Disability Preference in hiring for State of Kansas civil service positions and promotions. If a person with a disability meets the qualifications for both the position they want to apply for and the Disability Preference, they would be given the opportunity to interview for the position. It is patterned off the Veterans Preference, K.S.A. 73-201.

This legislation would make the State of Kansas a model employer for hiring people with disabilities. We would be the 7<sup>th</sup> state in the nation who has demonstrated its support for hiring people with disabilities for civil service jobs. The other states are Louisiana, Missouri, Utah, Maine, California and Oregon. There are other states working on becoming model employers.

Also, the Disability Preference would support the State of Kansas' Employment First policy which was passed in 2011, K.S.A. 44-1136 et seq. Employment First requires state programs that help people with disabilities find jobs in competitive integrated settings the first priority for state programs that help people find jobs. As we work toward total implementation of Employment First, the State of Kansas can demonstrate its commitment to helping people with disabilities find competitive integrated employment by giving them opportunities to interview of positions they are qualified for.

The National Governors Association 2012 Chair's Initiative was employment of people with disabilities. Governor Jack Markell's report A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities answers the question Why?

- **The Right Thing to Do**—Individuals with disabilities have demonstrated ability and are an untapped resource.
- **The Smart Thing for Government to Do**—Individuals with disabilities are heavily reliant on government benefits. When people with disabilities are employed and living more independently, they are less reliant on government payments and contribute to the economy.
- **Makes Good Business Sense**—Individuals with disabilities are a valuable asset for business. There are business models throughout the United States with proven results.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of passage of HB 2443. I am happy to stand for questions.