



Testimony of Buddy Sell
Executive Vice President
Government Channels and Chief Revenue Officer
Envision

Before the Kansas House Committee on
Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development

Hearing on Senate Bill 333, concerning the State Use Law Committee

March 5, 2024

Chair Erickson and Members of the Kansas Senate Committee on Commerce:

Good morning! My name is Buddy Sell and I serve as Executive Vice President, Government Channels and Chief Revenue Officer, with Envision. While I'm providing testimony on behalf of Envision, I also serve as Chair of the Kansas State Use Law Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to convey Envision's strong support for Senate Bill 333, which extends the Kansas State Use Law Committee for another five-year period.

The Kansas State Use Law Committee brings together the state's procurement office, legislators, state agency and school district customers, nonprofit rehabilitation centers that serve people with severe disabilities in the State of Kansas, and private citizens. The State of Kansas spends millions of dollars annually on supporting people with disabilities through our public school system and then allocates an extremely small percentage of that same important funding to support adults with disabilities after they graduate to help them find and sustain employment.

I've been involved in creating opportunities for people who are severely disabled and/or people who are visually impaired for the past 32 years, and I get to see every day the sense of genuine pride that individuals with disabilities have through being gainfully employed (and receiving a paycheck that they earned)! The financial benefits that social security and/or SSI benefits provide people with disabilities do not come anywhere close to garnering that same sense of pride and self-esteem and dignity that comes with meaningful work.

An individual that is totally blind once told me that, when initially talking to friends, family, or even meeting strangers, often one of the first questions that people ask others is "What do you do?" He went on to explain that they are not generally asking about your hobbies, or your chores, but instead they want to know what you do for a living and more specifically where you work.

The State Use Law Committee has been successful in bringing win/win solutions to state customers and applying leverage to the rehabilitation community to ensure that pricing remains competitive, product quality meets expectations, new products are introduced, and lead-times are meeting customers' expectations. To make the Use Law a true win/win, we need to have stakeholders working closely together (on a regular basis) to provide long-term solutions for the taxpayers, the state's customers, and persons with disabilities in the State of Kansas.

The Use Committee has worked to reduce the burden on the state's procurement office while simultaneously meeting the customers' requirements by creating a non-mandatory State Use blanket purchase agreement for personal protective equipment (PPE), which was highly effective during COVID. The Committee has also created other non-mandatory special buy opportunities for state customers to quickly meet their evolving needs. These innovative win/win ideas (born through strong collaboration within the State Use Committee) provide

additional employment and financial support to the State Use vendors' rehabilitation programs, and they also offer the state's customers an additional alternative to meet some of their supply-chain constraints for their critical requirements (if/when they determine that the products/services are competitively priced and available in the specified timelines required). None of these win/win opportunities would have been discussed, created, or innovated without the Use Law Committee working closely together.

Removing the sunset clause for the State Use Law Committee was also recently endorsed in a referendum by the Kansas Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB)!

Thank you again for the opportunity to present testimony in support of SB 333 at this hearing. Envision and I look forward to continuing to work with the Kansas Legislature to improve the quality of life and provide inspiration and opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired through employment, outreach, rehabilitation, education, and research. I am happy to take questions.