

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STEVEN R. BRUNK
CHAIRMAN, FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS
REPRESENTATIVE, 85TH DISTRICT
8119 CHAMPIONS CT.
WICHITA, KANSAS 67226
(316) 744-2409

STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 149-S
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7645
steve.brunk@house.ks.gov



TOPEKA

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
CHAIRMAN: FEDERAL & STATE AFFAIRS
MEMBER: TAXATION
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
JOINT COMMITTEE ON STATE
BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION

I am here today to discuss HB 2442. My purpose is not to talk about the mechanics of the bill, but to discuss two very important principles that drive us to enact legislation like this.

The first principle is the value of the individual. I am convinced that we are a unique creation of God, and that each individual has great value simply because we are human beings.

Most of the things that we do in our culture are meant to enhance the quality of life. We build better roads with dividers, rumble strips and safety barriers to help people be safer drivers, to protect them. We build cars with better airbags and warning systems to keep us safe. For those that have physical disabilities we provide convenient parking. Our health care system is constantly trying to improve on health delivery, improve our surgical techniques, improve our understanding of the human body and the human condition, so that we might raise the standard and the quality of life. We do these things because we value life, and deem it to be "good".

I believe the second principle in place is personal dignity and to a degree, "self-esteem". We are created to work – there is great value in work. Whether our purpose is to sell real estate, be a lawmaker, be a homemaker; or perhaps serve your family, your community or our country in some way in the public or the private sector; or even to work in the family home environment to care for and uphold the next generation; wherever we are skilled and capable, we should work.

The byproduct of working and utilizing the skills and talents available to us is personal satisfaction, and to a greater extent "joy". There is a great deal of personal satisfaction and joy with a "job well done". And from that there is dignity.

And because we value the human person, and because there is dignity in work, it seems to me it is incumbent upon us as law makers to help create an environment for those who face challenges; an environment that aids them in their quest for dignity through the value of "work". While life is fraught with complications, and sometimes life is fragile and difficult, it doesn't negate the fact that at its core, life is good.

For those employers who do make accommodations for individuals with disabilities, there are practical benefits. Studies show that disabled workers have lower job turnover rates and lower absenteeism rates. In short, they are loyal employees. That loyalty and desire to do a good job can spread through the workforce environment.

HB 2442 provides a tool for those employers who want to provide an environment for people with disabilities that can and will work within their ability. To the degree that 2442 is an appropriate tool to aid in the value of work, if we can, then we should implement it.