



LAURA KELLY, Governor • KATHY KECK, Chairperson • STEVE GIEBER, Executive Director

“To empower individuals with I/DD and their families to lead systems change, build capacity, and advocate for inclusive, integrated, accessible communities where everyone belongs and thrives.”

February 2, 2022

RE: Proponent House Bill 2219

Testimony by: Jeff Schroeder, Public Policy Coordinator
Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities

Madam Chair Erickson and members of the Senate Committee on Commerce:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to your committee today.

The Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities (KCDD) would like to express our support of House Bill 2219, the Kansas targeted employment act to provide tax credits for the employment of persons with developmental disabilities.

Kansas was the first state in the nation to implement an employment first initiative, and pass into law on July 1, 2011 the Kansas Employment First Initiative Act declaring that it is the policy of the state of Kansas that competitive and integrated employment shall be considered its first option when serving persons with disabilities who are of working age to obtain employment. Requiring all state agencies to follow this policy and ensure that it is effectively implemented in their programs and services.

“While there is little opposition to the goals of Kansas’ Employment First law, nothing has led to real, measurable progress since its implementation. In spite of a wide variety of initiatives implemented across state agencies that focus on improving competitive, integrated employment outcomes for people with disabilities, there is still much work needed to make systematic and measurable progress.” – Employment Systems Change Coalition report published in 2018.

KCDD’s mission is to empower individuals with I/DD and their families to lead systems changes, build capacity, and advocate for inclusive, integrated, accessible communities where everyone belongs and thrives. We believe that HB2219 provides a great opportunity to incentivize and encourage employers to hire qualified job seekers with disabilities who are looking for secure, permanent, competitive and integrated employment. We have learned that employers who choose to hire individuals with disabilities report their employees exceed expectations, demonstrate an increased loyalty, improve productivity in work environments, and have increased attendance records. Furthermore, hiring and retaining a diverse staff of highly qualified employees, which include individuals with disabilities, makes significant contributions to an employer’s overall success.

Thank you.

Jeff Schroeder, Public Policy Coordinator
Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities