



EQUALITY ♦ LAW ♦ JUSTICE

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Testimony in Support of HB 2416
House Taxation Committee
April 4, 2017

Chairman Johnson and members of the Committee:

My name is Mike Burgess. I am the Director of Policy & Outreach at the Disability Rights Center of Kansas (DRC). DRC is a public interest legal advocacy organization that is part of a national network of federally mandated organizations empowered to advocate for Kansans with disabilities. DRC is the officially designated protection and advocacy system in Kansas. DRC is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, organizationally independent of state government and whose sole interest is the protection of the legal rights of Kansans with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for HB 2416.

HB 2416 creates a new incentive for “qualified vendors.” The incentive is that it allows a 15 percent tax credit for all goods and services purchased from a “qualified vendor” who is creating jobs for people with disabilities and meets the criteria outlined in the bill.

In 2011, Kansas was the first state in the nation to pass an Employment First law. Kansas policymakers should be rightfully proud that since passing its Employment First law the clear majority of states have followed suit and have either an official policy or law on the books endorsing Employment First. This act specifies that employment should be the first option for individuals with disabilities, and they should be paid a competitive wage in an integrated setting.

This bill ensures the “qualified vendors” under this bill are creating competitive and integrated employment opportunities for people with disabilities in line with the Kansas Employment First Act. This means people with disabilities are paid a competitive wage comparable to people without disabilities in settings that are not segregated.

We support this effort to help create competitive and integrated employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for this bill. I would be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.