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Friday January 28, 2022

**Madam Chair Rene Erickson,
Vice Chairman Sen. Mark Steffen,
Honorable Chair and Distinguished Members of the Committee:**

Concerning support for HB 2219:

We often speak of the humanitarian goal of integrating individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities into our communities as much as possible to help them live enriched lives of dignity and respect, lives of greater quality for having the full human experience so they might learn and grow and help advocate for themselves. But action, as always, is needed to give our words a real and measurable effect. Such quality of life can only be assured through the greater visibility of IDD individuals to avoid the horrible sins of our nation's past. Take for example the sequestered, collective residential settings that amounted to sweeping whole lives under the rug, settings that historically were a magnet for profound abuse and neglect, a true humanitarian crisis. While we've advanced significantly beyond those days in terms of the services provided on the residential front, on the basic cares for daily living, one area we haven't advanced nearly as far to this day is public employment for IDD individuals.

We must face this lingering challenge with new action. Employers have shown that they are resistant to making accommodations, tailoring jobs for special needs individuals when what ultimately drives them is market pressures: be as competitive as possible, produce and sell more than your rivals, earn more profit to continue growing your brand. Too many IDD individuals are left to employment measures that yet reflect the paradigms of the past: less-than-fully-integrated, collective workshop models. Employers at large need to be incentivized to open up their doors, create new opportunities that can be of mutual pride and benefit. When that can be accomplished and lives of greater visibility, dignity and respect result, when we can reduce a financial burden on the state, a real win-win for all parties, there should be no hesitation. So please represent the IDD individuals in the communities you were elected from as well as uplift their families, support networks and through them their communities by creating a means for new, specialized job creation and more integrated IDD employment. Please support HB 2219.

Thank you for your consideration,

Scott Mayes

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