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Chairman Rhoades & fellow Committee Members:

I appreciate very much the opportunity to enthusiastically speak in support of HB 2442.

The state of Kansas has established a very effective support structure for the developmentally and physically disabled through the Home and Community Based Services Medicaid Waiver. Our State spends significant dollars each year to provide Special Education training for our youngsters who exhibit developmental disabilities (in 2011 the total special education budget was \$750 million).

Although those with disabilities have some opportunities for employment at the present time most jobs are part time and provide little in the way of health insurance or other benefits.

The goal of HB 2442 is to take the next step by provide an opportunity for the disabled to enjoy the satisfaction of working in a competitive environment. It has been demonstrated that individuals with disabilities exhibit a strong work ethic and become very productive workers. Center Industries in Wichita, who employees 300 individuals many of whom are disabled, has an excellent work force.

The bill encourages the hiring of individuals with developmental and physical disabilities by companies that contract with the state of Kansas through the Director of Purchasing as well as the hiring of more individuals with disabilities by "Use Law" vendors. The incentive mechanism works in two ways:

1. A certified business that employs 20% disabled workers and provides at least 70% of the cost of the workers health insurance will have a 10% advantage in the state bidding process.

2. We recognize that not every company will want the disabled to make up 20% of their workforce. Therefore, a second provision allows a responsible bidder to deduct the cost of purchases made from "Use Law" vendors during the previous calendar year from the original bid. This deduction may not exceed 10% of the original bid price.

At the present time there is no incentive for private companies to purchase from "Use Law" vendors. This bill will provide that incentive and has the potential to require workforce expansion by "Use Law" vendors.

HB 2442 allows individuals who happen to be disabled to enjoy the satisfaction of contributing to society that comes with employment. At the same time the individual is not dependent upon the Medicaid Waiver and the state saves Medicaid dollars while moving more of the disabled off of the waiting list.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important legislation.