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Testimony to House Taxation Committee
In Opposition to HB2560
By Shannon Jones, KACIL
February 9, 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today on behalf of people with disabilities and Centers for Independent Living in opposition to HB 2560.

We have been strong advocates for the Kansas heritage of our tax burden being equally shared between income, sales, and property. The tax bills we have supported in the past have worked to that end. Governor Brownback's proposals drive the state in the wrong direction. Since FY 2004 the state and local taxes paid by the Kansas taxpayer has hovered around 10%-11% of personal income and it has been balanced among the three components of sales income and property taxes. We would like to see it kept that way.

The increase in personal deductions doesn't offset the increases in taxes the poor and the middle class will be paying in the future. We don't support the elimination of the Homestead Refund Program which affects 132,136 low income tax filers. We don't support the elimination of the Food Sales Tax Refund which affects 322,248 filers. We don't support the elimination of the Earned Income Tax Credit potentially affecting 255,000 low income taxes.

We question the wisdom of the legislature reneging on its previous commitment to return the sales from 6.3% to 5.7%. Under Governor Brownback this means the poor and needy take another hit. The previous eliminations get further compounded for low-income and middle-income tax payers because the sales remain at the high level of 6.3%.

We question the wisdom of the 2% imposed upon the state's budget process. In the past, the state has had the flexibility to move and to financially respond to natural disasters and other unscheduled critical events which have come to the attention of the Governor and the legislature. The arbitrary nature of the 2% rule risks unresponsiveness to human needs on the part of state government.

We urge more careful attention be given to tax policy. We call for fairness and equity for all Kansans.