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## Topeka Independent Living Resource Center

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January 17, 2017

To: Senator Vicki Schmidt, Chairperson  
Senate Committee on Public Health & Welfare

From: Mike Oxford, Exec. Dir. Public Policy & Advocacy  
Topeka Independent Living Resource Center

Re: Support for HB 2343, Ensuring Non-discrimination of Organ Transplants in the Basis  
or Disability

The Topeka Independent Living Resource Center (TILRC) is a civil and human rights organization. Our mission is to advocate for justice, equality and essential services for a fully integrated and accessible society for all people with disabilities. TILRC has been providing cross-age, cross-disability advocacy and services for 36 years to people with disabilities here in Shawnee County and across the state of Kansas. Our agency has been a fierce advocate for the civil rights codified in the Americans with Disabilities Act since its inception.

In keeping with our agency mission, TILRC supports HB 2343. People with disabilities ought to be able to qualify for organ transplants under the same criteria and conditions as their peers without disabilities. Judgments about quality of life stemming from unfounded fears and misconceptions about disabilities, especially certain types of disabilities such as cognitive, intellectual, or mental health is exactly what the ADA is supposed to protect people with disabilities from. While our agency hasn't had direct experience with discrimination in granting organ transplants, I am aware of cases in other parts of the country, and we have had instances of discrimination against people with disabilities that resulted in significant medical harm.

It is for these reasons that TILRC supports HB 2343, "Ensuring Non-discrimination of Organ Transplants on the Basis of Disabilities", and requests the Committee to rise in favor of this bill.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

***Advocacy and services provided by and for people with disabilities.***