

February 9, 2023

Chairman Tarwater and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kathy Lobb. I am a person with a developmental disability and a self-advocate. You may recognize me because for nearly 20 years I educated Legislators to enhance the rights of people with disabilities.

As an individual self-advocate, I strongly opposed to HB 2275 as it is currently written. This bill would expend the current tax credit program to allow those who pay people with disabilities sub-minimum wage to benefit from the program. That's not right.

I support the current law. The current law says that if you pay sub-minimum wage that you cannot offer these tax credits. The current law expires at the end of 2023. I would be fine with keeping the current law and extending it.

Paying people with disabilities less than the minimum wage is not fair. You may have never heard of the term sub-minimum wage. I am here to tell you that sub-minimum wage is wrong. The key word is "sub." Paying people with disabilities sub-minimum wage makes us feel sub-human. We are not sub-human. We have the same hopes and dreams as you do. You wouldn't want to be paid less than minimum wage, would you?

Unlike current law, this bill would allow organizations that pay people with disabilities sub-minimum wage to use the additional business they will get from offering these tax breaks to support their sheltered workshop. This bill rewards bad behavior. That's not right.

We have made a lot of progress reducing the use of sub-minimum wage in Kansas. There are a lot fewer sheltered workshops that pay subminimum wage then when I first started advocating around 20 years ago.

In conclusion, I would support extending the current law so that the tax credits can continue for organizations that do the right thing and do not pay sub-minimum wage. I would support the bill if it was amended to continue the current policy where those who pay sub-minimum wage could not benefit from this program.

Thank you. I would answer questions at the appropriate time.