

February 14, 2001
Representative Erin Davis, Chair
Kansas State Capitol
Room 281-N
Topeka, KS 66612

In support of HB 2745; Establishing a task force that would draft a transition bill of rights to educate parents and students regarding their rights and resources related to transition services for students receiving special education.

Dear Chair Davis

My name is Carol Prothe and I'm a proud mom of an amazing young man with Down syndrome who is in his senior year of high school. My husband and I have been advocating for our son since the day he was born, in an environment that isn't always disability friendly. In fact, our former school district was so adamant about keeping him in a segregated classroom we moved districts in hope of giving him better opportunities. Until this year the move proved to be very positive for him and this year it seems like we are constantly fighting what we left in our former district, they keep trying to segregate him and we keep fighting, this is his senior year and it's supposed to be his best. My son is so excited about graduation and what might be next for him, he has his eyes on the prize and that prize is college and living on his own. He is so excited about living on his own he has taken everything out of his room and packed it up so it's ready for college. How are we as parents supposed to plan for his future when we don't know what is out there and where to go for the information. We are relying on and to a certain degree trusting our school district to give us the information, but that information we have yet to receive and it is information that should have been given us before now, so we can plan accordingly. It's not like with our older daughter where we visited colleges, filled out the forms and sent her off for her freshman year of college, for our son it's going to take time, lots of planning, phone calls, meetings and a lot of luck to have him ready to transition to this next phase of his life, a life that all seniors in high school get to enjoy. Our hopes for him is he will have a job that he loves and active life spending time with family and friends doing the things he loves, making his own money so he is not dependent on the government and living on his own. To be able to do that we as parents need to know what services are available for him and at this time we have no idea and I consider myself an informed parent, I feel like we are flying blind.

I strongly support HB 2745 in the hopes that other families will have the tools at their fingertips that are necessary for all people with disabilities and their families to make informed decisions about the future of their kids. My son is 3 months away from graduation and hopefully with a little bit of luck we will be able to navigate the transition process and come out with a great plan and future for our son, but this is a future that should have been discussed long before now and I urge the committee to support HB 2745.

Sincerely,

Carol Prothe