

**KS House Social Services Budget Committee  
HB2549 Hearing  
Lou Ann Kibbee, Systems Advocacy Manager**

Thank you Chairman Carpenter and committee members for allowing me to present written testimony on HB2549. My name is Lou Ann Kibbee and I am the Systems Advocacy Manager for Southeast KS Independent Living (SKIL) Resource Center. SKIL is a Center for Independent Living that advocates for the rights of, and provides services to, thousands of people of all ages with all types of disabilities annually across the State of Kansas. We fight for justice and equality with and for them, to have the opportunities as other people do. Opportunities to live in our homes, receive the supports and services needed, receive an equal education leading to a productive and fulfilling vocation, develop relationships and families as desired, get involved in our communities, and partake in recreation and hobbies as we choose. We are driven by a philosophy of consumer choice, in that we have the freedom to make decisions and choices about our lives, as well as having the dignity of risk.

SKIL appreciates the committee working on the increase of the Protected Income Level (PIL) to 150% to be ongoing. But SKIL would like to recommend that the committee increase the PIL to 300% of SSI. There are still approximately 2,000 individuals who pay monthly Client Obligations with the PIL at 150%. Many of these individuals or their spouses worked hard through the years to assure that their social security disability benefits would be enough for them to meet their needs. Unfortunately, they did not know that they would need home and community based services and have to pay a client obligation to receive them. For many this client obligation has made their life difficult in most situations. We have heard of some having to decide whether to pay their client obligation or their mortgage. This is an impossible situation.

We ask the committee to allow individuals to keep their monthly social security income by increasing the Protected Income Level to 300% of SSO. Thank you for the opportunity!

Attached are letters from two SKIL customers who wanted to give their testimony.

Hello, my name is Marion Leistikow. I am 76 years old and live in Parsons. I have congestive heart failure, hard of hearing, depression, hypothyroidism, arthritis throughout my body, and use a walker. My husband of 50 years died 6 years ago.

I worked as a Certified Nurse Aide until switching professions. Then I worked as a screen printer for t-shirts until my disabilities made me retire, mostly because of the arthritis in my hands. I collected my own Social Security until after my husband passed. I then began getting his Social Security because it was higher. My husband grew up in Parsons, and I on a farm outside of Parsons. My husband taught school in Altamont and Parsons for many years. He had a life insurance policy to make sure that I would be taken care of after he was gone. After he passed, we discovered that it had lapsed in payment of \$1,500, so the insurance policy would not pay out. We believe the lapse was due to his Alzheimer's. So I have been trying to survive on Social Security for the last six years.

I could not afford to live on my own, so I moved in with my daughter and son-in-law five years ago. I would be in a nursing home if I didn't have this option, and the nursing home would take almost all of my Social Security every month.

Without the help of my daughter and sons, I would not be able to survive. I cannot afford to pay a Client Obligation even while living with my daughter, because of the bills that I have to pay from my social security check. I have to have a supplemental Medicare program, and drug coverage just to stay alive. If I was able to qualify for Medicaid without a Client Obligation, I would benefit greatly from attendant care services. My daughter and son-in-law work long hours so even though I live with them, I spend a lot of time alone. I have fallen numerous times and cannot get up on my own. Once I have fallen it takes two people to lift me off of the floor.

As it is right now, if I were to go on Medicaid to get some assistance in my home, especially while my daughter and son-in-law are gone, my Client Obligation would be more than \$500.00 per month because of my income. I cannot afford to pay that monthly. There are months that my medications have cost in excess of \$350.00 because I am allergic to many kinds of medicines. I would not be able to pay for the medicine without assistance from my family.

It would help me greatly if the legislators would stop the Client Obligation for people who receive attendant care services in their home. My husband and I worked and contributed all our lives in our communities. My children and I would feel much more comfortable knowing that I was safe and had a little help from a attendant in my home, rather than being alone quite so much. I am sure my husband would rest more peacefully also. I would appreciate your help with this. Thank you so much for your time and work!

Marion Leistikow  
1430 Washington Ave  
Parson, KS  
620-778-0245

Hello Legislators,

My name is Rick Johnson. I am 66 years old and live in Neodesha, KS. I am legally blind. I have diabetes, an enlarged heart, chronic sinusitis and bronchitis, and use a walker. I receive Home and Community Based Services on the Physical Disability waiver to help me stay in my home.

First, I would like to thank you for increasing the Protected Income Level last year to \$1,177. The increase certainly helped me, but I still have to pay a monthly Client Obligation of \$627. Since we got a small increase in Social Security this year, my payment will be increasing again but I do not know the amount yet.

I worked hard my whole life, mainly in construction. I was with the Operating Engineer Local 627 out of Muskogee. We built dams and roads, cleaned rivers out, and hurricane dikes. I also worked for the railroad later on.

If I did not have to pay a Client Obligation, I would use the money to pay more bills and buy food. I worked hard through the years, hoping that I would have enough income to at least maintain my bills and be comfortable at my age. I had no idea that I would be in the situation I am. I would ask that you change the law to stop the Client Obligation requirement, so people like me can keep the money we earned to take care of other bills and needs that we have.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Rick Johnson  
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