



February 19, 2019

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 2044, AN ACT concerning income taxation; relating to credits; certain purchases of goods and services from qualified vendors that employ individuals who are blind or severely disabled; qualifications, procedures, and limitations.

H.B. 2044 would create a state income tax credit for a taxpayer's purchase of goods and services from a qualified vendor. A qualified vendor, among other requirements, must have 30% of its workforce classified as disabled, contribute at least 75% of the premium cost for individual health insurance, meet hourly work requirements and pay minimum wage or above.

The Chamber stands in strong support of this legislation as we believe it is good and appropriate public policy for the state of Kansas. Passage of H.B. 2044 would help create opportunities for some Kansans that often are not presented with the full slate of opportunity regularly afforded most Kansans. The ability to work and earn income provides independence and mental well-being for these valued Kansans and should be a foundational cornerstone of our state's efforts to assist our blind or disabled citizens.

This tax credit creates an incentive for firms to use and do business with entities that largely employ blind and disabled individuals. In effect, it helps create a fairer and more level playing field within the market for the goods and services offered by the organizations employing disabled citizens. It also likely is a benefit to the State General Fund as it may reduce the need for certain types of assistance from the state as citizens find opportunity for more independence and earn income.

Mr. Chairman, we urge the Committee to report H.B. 2044 favorable for passage.

Very truly yours,

Jason P. Watkins
Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce