



LAURA KELLY, Governor • KATHY KECK, Chairperson • STEVE GIEBER, Executive Director

“To ensure the opportunity to make choices regarding participation in society and quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities”

House Committee on Judiciary

Feb. 8, 2022

Chairman Patton and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to write to you today. My name is Craig Knutson, Policy Analyst for the Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities (KCDD). The Council is made up of self-advocates, family members, state agencies, and our partners identified in the Federal Developmental Disabilities Act.

Federal and state laws created the Council to advise policymakers on issues that impact people with disabilities and their families as well as carryout activities that increase Self-Advocacy, Systems Change, and Capacity Building.

The Council is writing you today in support of HB 2507, adding denial of civil rights based on a person’s disability to the crime of denial of civil rights.

As the national The Arc explains, “The history of living with a disability in the United States has largely been one of discrimination, segregation, and exclusion from education, work, housing, and even from routine daily activities.

Fortunately, today people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have the same basic legal, civil, and human rights as other citizens. The U.S. Constitution, federal laws, and federal court decisions have established these rights. However, despite the tremendous advances, limitations of laws and regulations, poor enforcement of the laws, limited funding of programs, disregard for binding legal precedent, and societal prejudices keep many people with disabilities from being fully included in our society. There is still a lot of work to do in order to make true community integration and recognition of civil rights a reality for ALL, including those with the most significant disabilities.”

By enacting HB2507, Kansas can take one step closer to overcoming the “limitations of laws and regulations, (and) poor enforcement of the laws” as cited by The Arc. Overcoming these limitations are vitally important for Kansans with disabilities because disability rights are civil rights and human rights. Everyone deserves to be included and live a full life in their community—accessing the same public spaces, housing opportunities, education, and work opportunities as everyone else.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for you today.

Respectfully,

Craig Knutson
Policy Analyst
Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities