

January 17, 2024

**RE: HB 2345 – The Supported Decision-Making Agreements Act
House Judiciary Committee Testimony in support of HB 2345**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the committee today. My name is Brad Linnenkamp and I am the current President of the Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas.

I, literally, would not be sitting here with you today if it weren't for supported decision making (SDM). I was raised to be an independent productive citizen by parents who taught me the value of standing up for myself. They also supported me in decisions that didn't quite work out the way it was planned. The important fact is that it was MY decision.

Years ago I would take someone with me when I went to the doctor's office for appointments. Far too often the medical staff only talked to my staff and not me. I don't take anyone with me anymore and people are forced to address me as the competent individual I am. I have been employed for more than twenty years. I own my own home and accessible van. And none of that would have been possible without supported decision making.

Many of my peers do not have this opportunity...because schools far too often have pushed guardianship even though there are many who would benefit from SDM and other alternatives to guardianship. As someone who has been there, other pathways to adulthood and independence should be examined.

While I use SDM informally today, this bill has many benefits. Please pass this bill. It's time we help make supported decision making an option for more individuals.

Kansas should join the growing list of states with SDM laws.