

March 7, 2017

TO: Sen. Carolyn McGinn, Chair and

Members, Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FR: Karen Baker, Executive Director, Riverside Resources, Inc.

RE: SB 1173

Riverside Resources, Inc. thanks the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 173.

SB 173, which provides for a 5% rate increase in each of the next 3 years is a vital step to ensuring that the people we serve continue to receive the support they need/desire to lead the best life possible. The lack of rate increases over the last several years has led to a shortfall of funds for HCBS providers. This lack of funding is most apparent in the continued inability of our organization to remain competitive with regard to wages and benefits when attempting to recruit and retain direct support professionals that will be committed to providing high quality supports to the people that we serve. The competitive job market in our community continually results in the loss of quality prospective and current employees due to better opportunities with higher pay rates. Often even direct support professionals who want to remain employed in this field find they can no longer afford to do so. The turnover is costly for our company and creates instability in the lives of persons-served as well as the intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) service system. As a result of an inability to hire and retain quality staff, our company has had to close a group living site which negatively impacts capacity and choice in Leavenworth County. Additionally, due to the shortage of staff, our direct support professionals and administrators have been working in mandatory overtime for almost a year to assure the continuation of quality services for persons in Leavenworth County.

Unfortunately, the unstable HCBS system creates great concern regarding the sustainability of service providers for persons with IDD in Leavenworth County and the State of Kansas. If this rate increase is not passed, service providers are going to be in the untenable position of continuing to make cuts to supports provided, if they are even able to remain operational at all.

Riverside Resources, Inc.
Leavenworth County