House Committee on Judiciary

Feb 11th, 2026

Proponent of HB2609

Chairwoman Humphries and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ricardo (Ricky) Hernandez and I am a Council Member for the Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities (KCDD). I am also a person with cerebral palsy, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2609, the Supported Decision-Making Agreements Act.

As a person with a disability, I know firsthand what it means to need support while still wanting to make my own decisions. Like many people with disabilities, I do not need someone to take over my life or make decisions for me. I need trusted people to help me understand information, talk through options, and communicate my choices. Supported decision-making reflects how many of us already live our lives and recognizes that needing support does not mean giving up our rights.

HB 2609 is important because it creates a clear, legal option for adults with disabilities to receive decision-making assistance while remaining in control of their own lives. It offers a less restrictive alternative to guardianship and reinforces the idea that adults with disabilities are capable of making decisions when given appropriate support. This bill centers dignity, independence, and self-determination, while also including safeguards.

This bill is especially meaningful to me because the committee hearing for HB 2609 is taking place on the same day as KCDD's annual Day at the Capitol, when self-advocates from across Kansas come together to share their stories and advocate for policies that impact their lives. HB 2609 directly reflects what many self-advoates are asking for: the right to be supported in the decision making process.

I strongly urge the committee to support HB 2609 and help ensure that Kansans with disabilities have access to supported decision-making as a safe, respectful alternative to guardianship. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Ricky Hernandez
Council Member
Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities