FamiliesTogether, Inc.

Parent Training & Information Centers for Kansas

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https://familiestogetherinc.org

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Wichita, KS 67203-5369
1-888-815-6364
wichita@familiestogetherinc.org

Topeka Parent Center
5611 SW Barrington Court South
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Topeka, KS 66614-2556
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Statewide Spanish Parent Line
1-800-499-9443

February 9, 2026

Testimony of Tami Allen-Parent and Co-Executive Director, Families Together Inc.
HB 2609

House Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of the Supported Decision-Making Agreements Act (HB 2609).

My name is Tami Allen, and I am the Co-Executive Director of Families Together, Inc., the Kansas Parent Training and Information Center. We serve families who have children and youth with special needs from birth through age 27. Our mission is to encourage, educate, and empower families to be effective advocates for their children.

As part of the transition process for youth, Families Together support families in exploring alternatives to guardianship, which can be costly and emotionally challenging. Supported Decision Making is a valuable tool that allows individuals to receive decision-making assistance while still maintaining their right to make choices about their own lives. Families Together strongly encourages Supported Decision Making as a less restrictive option that respects the autonomy and dignity of youth and adults with disabilities.

I am also the parent of an adult who has used Supported Decision Making throughout his adult life. We have supported him using a process that allows him to choose his own team of supporters. His supporters do not make decisions for him or on his behalf. Instead, they help him consider options and weigh the pros and cons of his choices. Supported Decision Making gives him the dignity of risk—the opportunity to make the same mistakes we all make and to learn from them.

During his growing years, we intentionally allowed him to make choices and to be a voice for the life he wanted. He has always clearly expressed his personal needs and is very vocal about his life choices. It is important to him that his decisions are respected and heard.

He currently accesses services through the IDD waiver and lives independently in his own apartment. He uses Supported Decision Making in many areas of his life, including financial decisions, purchasing appliances for his apartment, making charitable donations, consenting to surgeries, and even making end-of-life decisions for his therapy pets.

Because he has been supported to make his own decisions, his quality of life—and his vision for his future—has been tremendous. He is an avid advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities and is very active in promoting Supported Decision Making as an alternative to guardianship. He believes individuals should have access to the least restrictive options in all areas of their lives.

As a parent of a young man who uses Supported Decision Making, I can say with confidence that he is happier and living a life of his choosing. He is not a burden to the community, but rather an asset to everyone he meets and to the community in which he lives.

Respectfully,

Tami Allen

Co-Executive Director, Families Together Inc.

Parent of a young man who uses Supported Decision Making