February 9, 2026

Testimony of Skylar Schwindt

House Judiciary Committee:

HB 2609

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my written testimony in favor of Supported Decision-Making Agreements Act (HB2609). My name is Skylar Schwindt and **I** am an individual who has Cerebral Palsy and an Intellectual Delay that has used Supported Decision Making in my personal life for many years. My mom and dad always taught me to be an advocate for myself and making decisions about my life has always been important to me. I would often get angry and depressed because I wanted to have the life ***I*** chose. I did not want people to talk for me or about me without my permission. As I started learning how to make supported decisions for my life, I was less angry and felt more in control of my own future. I am on the IDD waiver, and I live in my own apartment. I self-direct all my services and am living the life ***I*** have chosen. We decided what types of support ***I*** felt I needed. Some things I can do completely on my own. Other things I need **some** support and there are a few things, such as paperwork and social security information that someone else needs to do for me. That is ok because that is a decision, ***I*** made for myself and not made by someone else. I am proud to say I am a taxpayer and registered voter!!

I have chosen my "team" that I use to support me in my decisions based on who I trust and feel comfortable with. Each person supports me in differing areas of my life. My mom supports me with my health care decisions and helps me decide on how to stay healthy and when I should see the doctor. She is also my representative payee for my finances. Another person supports me by balancing my check book, paying bills and deciding on how to save for things I want to purchase for myself or others. Another individual supports me with electronics that I enjoy having.

When I wanted to direct my own services, I was told I could not because I had a disability. I said, “what disability”? A disability does not define a person. It is about ***YOU*** and what you need and want and like in your life. I have a right to make my own mistakes, the same ones everyone else does. I am proud to say by using Supported decision making I have never been late on a bill, and I have even built a good credit score. (My two brothers who do not have a disability have to borrow money from my parents sometimes). I am happy with my life thanks to the “support” I receive from my team of supported decision makers.

Respectfully,

Skylar Schwindt

Wichita, KS