

STATE OF KANSAS
SENATE

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KELLIE WARREN
11TH DISTRICT

January 31, 2024

Chairwoman Baumgardner, Vice-Chairwoman Erickson, Ranking Minority Member Sykes, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 360, which I've introduced in the legislature with the support of our Kansas State Treasurer Steven Johnson, and the Executive Director of the Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities (KCDD) Sara Hart Weir.

This bill represents a partnership of the State Treasurer, KCDD, and the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services. The ABLE Act really arose out of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA was enacted in 1990. It brought a profound change to our legal landscape, and change to the daily lives of many Americans. Civic leaders of all political persuasions have worked towards ensuring that we have the laws and infrastructure in place necessary to ensure that those in the IDD community have an opportunity to succeed and fully participate in society.

As a senator, I believe we should strive for a level playing field by removing unnecessary barriers to potential success. The state can play an important role in making that happen by establishing guidelines that maximize the ability for programs like the ABLE Act to succeed, and that's what this bill does. By extending the time to make the contribution to the ABLE account from December 31st of the year of the contribution, to the date required for filing the tax return, which is generally April 15 of the following year, it will be easier for taxpayers who make ABLE account contributions to not miss the deadline for making the contribution since it will align with the deadline for filing taxes, and other contributions deadlines.

Senate District 11 is the proud home of a large number of employed Kansans with disabilities. This bill would be a particular benefit to my own constituents, but would be a great benefit to everyone in Kansas, as well. Most importantly, this bill will enable Kansans with disabilities to live more independently as they are able, and otherwise provide for resources to enhance their lives.

So today it's my honor to help carry on U.S. Senator Bob Dole's legacy, by serving families in the IDD community with this, the largest state coordinated ABLE Act outreach effort since its inception.

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One other aspect of the bill is likewise amending the deadline for first-time home buyer savings account contributions from December 31st of the year of the contribution, to the date required for filing the tax return, which is generally April 15 of the following year. This bill, would increase the opportunity for first-time home buyers to add to their resources as they save to buy their first home here in Kansas.

So, together, this bill is a one-two combination to improve the lives of Kansans with disabilities and first-home buyers.

Thank you to Treasurer Johnson and his entire team, to KCDD Executive Director Weir, and to KDADS for working together to bring the ABLE Act change to me to introduce and champion, and again to Treasurer Johnson and his entire team for the change to the first-time home buyer savings account and for reaching out to me.

Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'll stand for any questions.