



March 20, 2015

To: House Committee on Human Services and Housing

From: Ross Ryan, Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition

RE: Support HB 2239 as amended to extend tax credit to employers hiring youth with intellectual or developmental disabilities

---

Chair Keny Guyer and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ross Ryan. Today I speak on behalf the Oregon Self-Advocacy Coalition (OSAC) which is a statewide organization made up of 18 local self-advocacy groups. We bring self-advocates together to speak with one voice on issues that are important to us. Employment is important to us so we can work and earn a pay check because we believe in equal and basic rights for people with disabilities.

It is important for young people with disabilities to work so they can be part of their community and be proud of what they are doing. Working also teaches young people that it is important to make your own living. Having a job can also inspire youth with disabilities to be more independent and create connections in the community.

When I was under age 18, I worked at a garden center. I watered plants, unloaded planter boxes and swept the floor. I earned minimum wage.

This job was really important because it taught me that I liked working in my community. I also liked earning money so I could do what I wanted to do. The job taught me that I could be independent, responsible and dependable.

I had to ride public transportation to get to work. Because of this job, I learned that I could get around my community using public transportation.

Some of my friends did not work in high school. They did not learn to be independent like I did.

My advice to young people with developmental disabilities is that they should get a job. When you have a job, you have money to do what you want and you can be more independent.

My advice to employers is that they should hire young people with disabilities so they can have the opportunity to show employers that people with disabilities can work and be a part of the community.

Creating an incentive for employers to hire young people with disabilities is a good idea because it could make more employers hire people with disabilities. Once employers hire people with disabilities, they will know that people with disabilities can work like everyone else.