

Rob Siedlecki, Acting Secretary

House Social Services Budget Committee

March 15, 2011

**HB 2296 – Establishing the Joint Committee
on Oversight of the Closure of Kansas
Neurological Institute**

Disability & Behavioral Health Services

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HB 2296 – Establishing the Joint Committee on Oversight of the Closure of KNI

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Chairman Crum and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to speak in support of HB 2296 a bill which would establish a Joint Committee on Oversight of the Closure of the Kansas Neurological Institute (KNI).

I want you to know that I understand the decision to close KNI is a very difficult one and we understand that any change or transition is always difficult. The concerns expressed by families, caregivers, advocates and the residents themselves are legitimate and we are taking them very seriously.

We strongly believe that persons with disabilities should not spend their lives institutionalized and cut off from the community. Everyone deserves to improve their lives, and particularly those who are most vulnerable in society.

Let me make this clear, this is not just a cost reduction issue. We want to improve outcomes and care for persons with developmental disabilities who will be transferring to the community and we want to be able to serve people that are currently not receiving any services that are on the DD Waiver waiting list.

SRS supports HB 2296 and we feel strongly that the savings from the closure of KNI should be used to take people off of the Developmental Disability (DD) Waiver waiting list, and put them into service. SRS recommends that Section 1. Paragraphs (a)(2) and (3) be changed to make it clear that the savings will be used only for the waiting list.

SRS also welcomes any oversight of the process of closing KNI and looks forward to working with the Joint Committee as we go through that process.

SRS is neutral concerning the provision in the bill to change from a first come first serve waiting list, to one that would be determined by a person's score achieved on the developmental disability assessment with priority given to those with the highest need.

This concludes my testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.