

**House Human Services Committee
Testimony of Bill Krebs
April 16, 2015**

My name is Bill Krebs. I was born with an intellectual disability, developmental delays, and a learning disability. I got my label at the age of 12.

Thank you for having this hearing. Here are my concerns.

People like myself and others deserve not to be on waiting lists in order to get services.

People with disabilities want: jobs, to live in the community, to have friends, to have meaningful relationships, and to live everyday lives. We need services through the waivers to do that.

As a person with a disability, I wasted 10 years of my life being in a sheltered workshop, where people were getting less than the minimum wage. My work, for example, was putting a screw, nut, and instructions in a bag over and over. My first check was \$1 for one week's work, while the workshop got \$180 a day from my insurance and said it was a therapeutic activity program. After being there for 10 years, I realized it was a "day waste program" not a day program. A lot of my friends are still in these workshops.

I was lucky to leave the workshop. I stayed home for a while until I joined a self-advocacy group. I learned about important issues for people with disabilities. I learned about self-advocacy and how to help others like myself speak up and speak out.

For years, I also learned by being on boards and committees on the local, state, and federal level. I learned about what was missing for people with disabilities. So, I started T.R.A.P.S. I am the Executive Director of T.R.A.P.S., which stands for Training, Resources, Advocacy, Personnel, and Specialists because people with disabilities feel like they are trapped in the system and don't know how to get out, no matter what disability we have. I also have an aging parent, so I want to learn how to be self-sufficient and what direct supports are available through the waiver.

I think there should be more funds for people with disabilities. Go after more Medicaid dollars to help people off of the waiting lists. No matter what disabilities people have, there shouldn't be any waiting lists.

Close down institutions including State Centers so people can live in the community in their own homes, or group homes, or have roommates of their choice.

There should be more choices. Some people do need the structure of day programs, but day programs should help people to transition to work, to learn about the community, and to learn about other opportunities. Other people who want to work should be able to work instead being put into day programs.

My famous quote is, "If you were blind, I would be your eyes to see. If you couldn't hear, I would be your ears. If you had no feet, I would walk for you. And if you had no hands, I would give you a hug because everyone needs one."

So, don't ever look at people's disabilities, look at their abilities. Not what they can't do, what they can do.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Krebs
Executive Director
T.R.A.P.S.
mr.trouble64@yahoo.com
(267) 257-0109