

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Lear, Ranking Member McNally;

Thank you for allowing me to testify concerning HB 225.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

That is an excerpt from the well-known poem “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost. My friend Joe and I were required to memorize this poem in a high school English class. I don’t know whether Joe remembers that or not, and neither of us could have known how prophetic this poem would be for us.

Joe and I graduated together from the Ohio State School for the Blind. I am a few years older than Joe, but at some time during elementary school Joe was skipped ahead two grades and joined my class. While at the Ohio State School for the Blind I was told that I was different from most blind people and that the teachers expected me to go to college and be successful. I don’t suppose that Joe ever heard those words because he was not recognized as academically talented and socially skillful. But I was identified as bright although I was and still am a terrible speller. I asked one of my teachers how I was going to deal with that problem. He said, “Don’t worry about it. You will have people working for you who will take care of spelling.” I have a BA In Sociology and Political Science and an MBA From Southern New Hampshire University. I have raised two boys as a single parent. I have been able to earn a good living and enjoy the benefits of full-time employment in both the public and private sectors.

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Joe has been trapped by working in a sheltered shop with an artificially low wage ceiling and lack of competitive employment to hold him back.