



February 8, 2023

To: Chair Fischer & Members of the House Human Services Policy Committee

Re: HF 1043

Dear Chair Fischer and Members of the House Human Services Finance Committee,

The Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCCD) would like to express our support of HF 1043. MNCCD is a broad-based coalition of advocacy and provider organizations and individuals working to change public policy to improve the lives of people with disabilities through building awareness, providing education, and engaging in the community. We are very supportive of HF 1043, which would create a task force to assess accessibility barriers.

MNCCD and many of our members co-hosted a town hall forum in August 2021 to discuss accessibility barriers in accessing disability services. The response was overwhelming. Individuals and families from across the state shared story after story of struggling to navigate the process of accessing disability services. People have struggled with assessments, eligibility, paperwork, phone tag with county workers, repeated appeals, and other roadblocks that both made it harder for them to access services and the whole service system more administratively burdensome and complex.

One of MNCCD's policy principles is creating an equitable, accessible, and safe society. Our vision is that all that Minnesota has to offer will be accessible to all Minnesotans—so that Minnesotans who have disabilities can live in their homes and communities, participate in community activities, work in jobs they choose, and live their lives. Many people who have disabilities use supports in order to do this. But when the process for accessing those supports itself presents disability barriers, we won't be able to achieve this vision for our state.

HF 1043 will bring together the stakeholders who need to come to the table to solve this. By identifying accessibility barriers and the costs associated with unnecessary and administratively burdensome process, the task force will be able to bring recommendations about how to remove these barriers. But HF 1043 also brings forward several measures that community experts – people who use these services and other advocates – believe are likely to address accessibility issues. We urge you to support this two-fold approach, which will ensure that we have all the information we need while we get efforts underway to address this problem.

Thank you Rep. Hicks for carrying this bill. Thank you all for your consideration and for your commitment to people who have disabilities and to building a fully accessible state. We hope you will support HF 1043.

Sincerely,

Julia Page
Public Policy Co-Chair

Trevor Turner
Public Policy Co-Chair