



Program Staff:
Main: 218-335-4500
Fax: 218-335-4519
Birdie 218-766-6721
Emily 218-513-3265
Michael 218-407-1668
Natalie 218-308-5814
Rick 218-766-5243
Shelly 218-368-7486



190 Sailstar Dr. NW Cass Lake, MN 56633

March 14, 2022

Representative Tina Liebling
Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee

Rep. Liebling and Members of Health Finance and Policy Committee:

I am writing in strong support of HF 4099. I am the Program Manager of the Family Spirit Program at the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and we are recipients of the Community Solutions Grant Program.

I support HF 4099 because I believe it is a strategy that addresses inequality as well as amplifies the innovative solutions that leverage community assets, are culturally relevant, and center the experiences and dignity of those most impacted by inequity.

I would like you and other legislators to know and understand the role this funding has within our community. Indigenous tribes, communities and organizations are engaged in the long-term work of Nation Re-Building. At the center of this effort are the inter-generational families who have endured decades of poverty, community disruption, and social dysfunction. They are also the living proof of the resiliency people can achieve when they are acknowledged, supported and encouraged.

The Community Solutions Grant Program represents more than money, it is also recognition that communities of color, Indigenous nations and communities, and geographically dispersed communities have invaluable knowledge, and must be active and valued participants within the creation of solutions for their communities.

As stated before, this is a long-term process, Nation Re-Building, Cultural Re-Vitalization and Family Empowerment don't happen overnight. The challenges we address today have been decades in the making. Success, growth, and vitality are returning but that success must be supported as an integral part of a continuum of healing, wellness and empowerment.

We strongly encourage you to support HF 4099, to join with us in becoming a partner for positive change and growth. The collective health and prosperity of our state is tied to ensuring every child has what they need to thrive."

Birdena Lyons, Supervisor
Leech Lake Family Spirit Program



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