

March 17, 2022

Re: HF 3896

To: Members of the House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee



Dear Chair Schultz and Committee Members,

Founded by parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in 1946, The Arc Minnesota is a statewide nonprofit advocacy organization that promotes and protects the human rights of individuals with IDD, supporting them and their families in a lifetime of full inclusion and participation in their communities. We are a chapter of The Arc of the United States, the largest national community-based organization advocating for people with IDD and their families.

The Arc Minnesota strongly supports HF 3896 which would bring together stakeholders to assess and identify accessibility barriers to disability services as well as monitor progress on pilot projects aimed at improving accessibility. At The Arc Minnesota, we believe stakeholder involvement is essential for improvement and redesign of a human service system that is flexible and responsive to individuals' support needs and expands their choice and control, while using resources effectively. As the experts in their lives, people with IDD and their families have valuable insights and observations to contribute. Therefore, they must be actively involved in all efforts to reform systems and redesign services and supports that better meet individualized needs.

One of the principles of the disability justice movement is collective access. Collective access is a term to explain that communities must be built so everyone is included in ways that are accessible for them. Information must be shared in ways that are accessible to everyone, too. This proposal works to ensure our state's disability services are accessible in ways that work for everyone and most importantly, that people with disabilities are included in the assessment and proposed solutions to accessibility barriers.

The Arc Minnesota encourages the committee to pass HF 3896 so that we can ensure people with disabilities have control in how their services are improved if they are not accessible, not high quality, not meeting their needs, or resulting in poor outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important bill.

Sincerely,

Julia Burkstaller
Public Policy Director