



Representative Peter Fischer, Chair
Human Service Policy
February 20, 2023

Chair Fischer and Human Service Policy Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN), we are writing in support of House File 1198, a bill that supports children and families through mental health support.

NASW - MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing nearly 2000 social workers. Our members work as mental health professionals, in child welfare systems, schools, and residential care. We offer experience and expertise in the connection between children and the systems in which they interact.

Social workers share the value of supporting children and their families from a relational strengths-based perspective. While House File 1198 includes many important policy changes that will support children's mental health, overall it is designed to give families the resources they need to support their children. When we invest in early intervention, we reduce trauma and empower families.

Important components in House File 1198 include policy changes to keep families out of the child protection system while in the midst of seeking emergency mental health support. Families should not be punished for seeking support for their children, and forcing them into the child protection system simply compounds their already complex needs. The bill will also give access to mental health support to children living in shelters. Unstable housing has devastating impacts on children and it is essential that we have direct support to minimize long-term trauma. These are just two examples in House File 1198; it is a comprehensive package that together, will create essential support for Minnesota children.

Please support HF 1198. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen E. Goodenough'.

Karen E. Goodenough, PhD, LGSW
Executive Director
NASW-MN

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jenny Arneson'.

Jenny Arneson, MSW, LGSW
Legislative Consultant
NASW-MN