

Chairman Ecklund and members of the Committee:

I would like to thank you for taking my testimony and allowing me to share my personal perspective on this issue.

My name is Jennifer Reiter- I am the parent of a 14 year old dynamo daughter that in addition to being creative, compassionate, curious, adventurous she also has the disability of autism. (Or as she says I have awesome!)

She is in the 8th grade and has big plans for her future. She wants to be a yoga instructor, musician or a vaccination specialist. She loves science, art and being in the world connecting with the life.

Olivia works so hard to find/create tools to help make navigating the world easier.

She, my niece with Downs Syndrome and an upcoming generation with disabilities want to pursue meaningful lives that include employment.

Pandemic life taught us we can think outside the box to create practices that with clarity, thoughtfulness and innovation can create possibilities never imagined before.

It reminded me in a vivid way that is vital to continually evaluate the status quo so we are strengthening/evolving our best practices in meaningful ways that provide the supports and possibilities individuals with disabilities need to live a full life of their choosing that allows them to thrive.

I am here to ask you to support this legislation.

This bill offers our state time and resources to prepare for change that WILL come in employment possibilities in ways that will have a dramatic impact on our communities and loved ones.

Covid-seemingly overnight- made my daughter's education, community connections, services, hobbies and routine disappear or alter significantly. It was devastating and painful for my family.

Change is inevitable. This bill offers time to plan and prepare for changes and create wider paths to customized AND competitive employment.

Subminimum wage is being eliminated throughout our country in ways that is not always centered in stakeholders from the disability community. Centering these voices is VITAL.

The task force called for in this bill will offer an avenue for that centering in addition to the planning time needed.

Covid taught us that it is impossible to prepare for every change. If you see the change coming we MUST take the steps to strengthen and protect the supports and create new ones so we are prepared as possible when change does arrive.

My daughter wants to work and be independent. Voices of the stakeholders-like Olivia and other people with disabilities, families and providers are a critical piece of the task force to be established through this bill.

If we keep the conversations centered on the different need levels in the disability community we can find the way to create new opportunities, strengthen current programs so that all in the community can choose the life that will allow them to soar, be supported, contribute their unique talents and gifts that will benefit them individually and our state collectively.

Please support this bill so we can work together to remove barriers



and create incredible possibilities of choice for my daughter and the entire disability community.

Thank for your time and attention to my testimony.

Respectfully,
Jennifer Reiter
Maple Grove, MN