

March 24, 2023

Re: HF 2925



Dear Chair Youakim and Members of the Education Finance Committee,

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.

The Arc Minnesota strongly supports HF 2925 which would ensure schools provide gender-neutral, single-user restrooms and locker room facilities. Feeling safe while using the restroom is a human right denied to many LGBTQ+ and disabled people—we are grateful Rep. Kozłowski is addressing this issue in Minnesota schools.

LGBTQ+ justice IS disability justice.¹ Research shows that LGBTQ people are more likely to have a disability than the general population.² Both communities have limited access to inclusive and accessible spaces. This is particularly true for people in rural communities. Not only are people living in rural areas more likely to have disabilities, LGBTQ+ people with disabilities in rural communities are at a greater risk for isolation and increased discrimination. Disabled LGBTQ+ people who live at the intersection of these two identities can face compounded discrimination and stigmatization, and it is important for those who serve, interact with, and love and care for those individuals to understand this complex dynamic.

Intentional and meaningful inclusion of all people—for people with intersecting identities especially—is preventative care. A growing body of research links experiences of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, as well as race, ethnicity, and disability status, prejudice, barriers to competent health care, lower rates of health insurance, poverty, experiences of violence, and more.

Providing fully accessible gender-neutral bathrooms benefits ALL people. Single-stall, gender-neutral facilities provide a safe accommodation for people with disabilities as they provide efficient space for people with mobility devices. Having these facilities in schools means teachers and students with disabilities will be able to use a restroom that provides accommodations that are safe. If there are after-school activities or events where the public comes in, single-stall, gender-neutral bathrooms are also beneficial for parents with young children and those providing assistance to people with disabilities.

Please support HF 2925 as it will benefit all Minnesotans, especially LGBTQ+ people with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Julia Page
Public Policy Director

Brittanie Hernandez-Wilson
Equity and Justice Director

¹ <https://www.sinsinvalid.org/blog/10-principles-of-disability-justice>

² <https://www.lgbtmap.org/file/LGBT-People-With-Disabilities.pdf>