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Re. Public Hearing Testimony HF4 (Hassan) - COVID-19; actions to combat the educational effects of the pandemic implemented, and money appropriated.

I testify before you today in regard to HF4 (Hassan) - COVID-19; actions to combat the educational effects of the pandemic implemented, and money appropriated.

Here are salient facts regarding my granddaughter, Hope Margaret Melton. Because of an underlying health condition, she was born with learning, cognitive and emotional disabilities. She was held back a year in first grade in the Edina Public School system, Hope has been on an IEP in Edina Public Schools since 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Finally, her immune system is compromised because of an underlying health condition.

As she neared graduation from Edina High School, her parents were advised to enroll her in the three-year Vector Transition Program, which is a continuation of her IEP. This three-year transition program supported by Edina Public Schools provides essential independent living and job skills training. The program enables young people like Hope Margaret to live independently, becoming responsible and productive, tax-paying citizens.

Last year, Hope Margaret's parents were informed that in spite of her excellent progress with the Vector Transition Program, she would be unable to complete the program because she will "age out". As things currently stand, she will be expelled from the program this June 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic Hope will be unable to complete the critical job training component of this essential program. Specifically, because of her compromised immune system, the fact that she repeated first grade, and perspective employer unwillingness to host trainees, she has been unable to participate in the final job training component of the program.

Not being able to complete the program leaves mission critical elements of the program unfulfilled, and thus substantially degrades the overall effectiveness of the Vector Transition Program.

It is unreasonable and unfair to deny young, vulnerable people like her the chance to complete the Vector Transition Program. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unforeseeable disruptions to educational programs and the proposed legislation will help mitigate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled persons.

I urge you to vote YES for HF4 (Hassan) - COVID-19; actions to combat the educational effects of the pandemic implemented, and money appropriated.

Respectfully,

Laura Hope Melton (Grandmother)  
Alexander and Kathleen Melton (Parents)