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Dear Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing as a parent of a child with Autism to express my strong opposition to the proposed reinstatement of parental fees for families enrolled in Minnesota's TEFRA Medical Assistance (MA) program [HF2434]. This change would disproportionately affect families like mine, who depend on these vital services to ensure our children thrive.

The TEFRA option under MA is a lifeline for thousands of Minnesota families like mine. The support of MA enables my son to receive positive, life-altering services that help him develop skills, gain independence and reach his full potential. The benefits he receives extend far beyond our household. He is better equipped to be an active participant in school, able to positively contribute to our community through volunteerism and ultimately requires less high-cost emergency/reactive services.

Minnesota made a compassionate and equitable decision several years ago to eliminate parental fees, recognizing that these fees placed undue financial strain on families already managing significant emotional, logistical, and financial challenges. Reinstating them now — even for higher-income families — is a step backward in inclusivity and accessibility. The costs of raising a child with disabilities are immense, and household income does not reflect the actual out-of-pocket expenses or the impact of caregiving responsibilities that often reduce a parent's ability, including mine, to work full-time.

Access to Medical Assistance through TEFRA is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Furthermore, it must be seen as a supplement to private insurance, not a replacement, which our family and others like us still require. It enables children to receive consistent care without interruption, allows families to remain stable and keeps schools and communities thriving. Reintroducing fees will create barriers to care and risk widening disparities in outcomes for children with disabilities.

I urge you to protect Minnesota's commitment to children with disabilities by opposing any measure that would reinstate TEFRA parental fees. Instead, continue to invest in equitable access to health care and support services for all families, regardless of income.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Laura McComish
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