

Human Services Conference Committee
Tuesday, May 2

Written TESTIMONY OF Mary Hauff

Senate District 45 and House District 45B Constituent

Chair Hoffman and Chair Noor and members of the Human Services Conference Committee:

My name is Mary Hauff. I am submitting my testimony in support of the Governor's proposal to phase out subminimum wage included in the House's omnibus bill. Thank you for accepting my written testimony.

Specifically, I support the House bill provisions (from HF2847) that include the establishment of the Statewide Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center, the Employment First Capacity Building grants, and phasing out subminimum wage. The bill provides a timeline and resources for service providers as well as Minnesotans with a disability to transition to and/or pursue employment at a competitive wage on a proactive basis. The proposed legislation does not eliminate center-based jobs or service providers and takes into consideration what has worked and not worked in other states that have already phased out subminimum wage. If the House's proposed legislation is included, then Minnesota will avoid the challenges that have been raised as concerns and were faced in other states.

The proposed legislation aligns with Minnesota's Employment First policy and the Olmstead Plan. All Minnesotans must have opportunities to make life choices about where they live, learn, work, and enjoy their lives in the most integrated settings alongside people without disabilities. Competitive integrated employment and earning a competitive wage are possible for Minnesotans with a disability who want to work. I have a 22-year-old daughter with an intellectual disability. Through her person-centered plan, she is making informed choices about her post-secondary

education, where she lives, and her career. Jean enjoys working with co-workers with and without disabilities. She currently has an internship and is paid a competitive wage. It is possible.

As a parent, I understand and share the concerns raised by families about the safety of their loved ones with a disability. However, segregating people with disabilities in center-based jobs earning a subminimum wage does not assure that they are safer or have a higher level of protection than if they are employed and earning minimum wage or higher in a competitive integrated job. If you want to address safety issues, I encourage you to look toward and support the recommendations from Minnesota's Comprehensive Plan for Prevention of Abuse and Neglect of People with Disabilities and the Olmstead Plan goals of Preventing abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and children.

Thirteen states have already passed legislation to phase out subminimum wages and the Federal government is considering similar legislation. It is a matter of time. I ask that you include the Governor's proposal to phase out subminimum wages that are in the House's Human Services Omnibus bill.

Thank you.