



---

To Support Each Individual to Achieve the Highest Level of Independence

March 31, 2022

Re: HF 4071

To: House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee

Chair Schultz and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of the task force on sub minimum wage as enacted in June of 2021.

Lake County DAC provides a range of services that promote growth and development in persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities including vocational assessments and training, job coaching, therapies, recreational and leisure skills, and self-care skills. Our program has offered paid work under the 14C Certificate for decades and has helped many create income they can access in their lives for the first time. Having the 14C has allowed us to provide the people we serve with valuable employment skills and confidence to transfer to community employment with an area business.

Our program has made great strides in supporting community employment for all. In the middle of 2019 we created initiatives and were successful in supporting five of the people we serve in gaining community employment. Our progress slowed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we have just recently gained back all community placements for those individuals and have added an additional placement. Those meeting their employment or entrepreneurship dreams are extremely happy but some still rely on the 14C.

We understand the importance in fair wages and community employment; it just cannot happen all at once for everyone. If 14C is phased out, we need to have a plan for the transition so that it does not negatively impact the individuals we serve. The work of the current task force is important and changes could prevent our state from being prepared if the prohibition of subminimum wage passes at the federal level.

The task force can bring a better understanding to the state on the critical areas of funding that keep those in employment gaps in our state. We know that a transition can happen, demonstrated by other providers throughout the state, but we need the guidance and pathways that the task force is working toward.

Your time is valuable and I appreciate the time you took to read my letter to understand why we do not support changes proposed in HF 4071 and support the task force in its current form.

Sincerely,

Michelle McDonald

Executive Director