

Mister Chair and members of the House Human Services Finance Committee,

We write today on behalf of The Arc Minnesota, Minnesota Disability Law Center, and Legal Services Advocacy Project with concerns about H.F. 3939, which seeks to grant Supervised Living Facilities (SLF) the option to transition to a Community Residential Services license (CRS).

Our country has a long history of segregating people with disabilities in large institutions and other congregate settings. Minnesota was among the first states in the nation to eliminate institutions and promote community-based residential settings. We need to continue that legacy of promoting inclusive options by providing access to smaller, more individualized housing where people have greater choice and control around where they live, with whom they live, and who provides their supports.

The current workforce shortage is already forcing people with disabilities to shift into larger congregate settings, and for this reason, HF 3939 could set a dangerous precedent - allowing more, larger settings to operate as CRS. The bill as written will allow for the creation of several permanent, six bedroom CRS facilities in Minnesota. This would be a fundamental divergence from the state's policy definition of CRS, go against Minnesota's Independent Living First policy as set forth in state statute, and walk back our commitment to supporting people in the most inclusive settings possible.

We have expressed these concerns to the bill proponents and offered several alternatives that our organizations could support, including removing the Minnesota Department of Health licensure requirements and/or transitioning these settings to four-bed residences upon an individual's elective transition or natural attrition. We welcome any opportunity to continue dialogue with Rep. Curran and bill proponents to identify solutions that address concerns related to CRS expansion.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Respectfully,

Alicia Munson, Chief Program Officer & Tina Rucci, Public Policy Director
The Arc Minnesota

Jennifer Purrington, Legal Director/Deputy Director
Minnesota Disability Law Center

Ellen Smart, Staff Attorney
Legal Services Advocacy Project