

Human Finance and Policy Conference Committee

May 3rd, 2023

Dear Chair (s) Noor and Hoffman,

Re: HF2847/SF2934 Human Services Omnibus

Many thanks for the opportunity to send my comments and hopefully testify in person if time allows.

My name is Idil Abdull; I am a Somali Autism Mom and Advocate. First, I want to thank you for having quite few “autism” words in both of your omnibus bills.

From the Senate side, I support the emergency grants for EIDBI providers as it has been extremely difficult to get and sustain competent and qualified staff. You may remember – Sen. Hoffman as you are the only one here back then along with Abeler – there were less than 10 autism (ABA) therapy providers before EIDBI became a law in May of 2013. Now there are over 200 hundred which is both a blessing and a challenge. DHS has increased providers without ensuring there were enough staff to fill the need. I think grant opportunity will help in this effort. I also hope this grant is used to increase the workforce for EIDBI providers.

From the House side, I support the licensure study. This will ensure our children are safe and there are policies and rules for everyone to follow. How DHS has this language is pleasantly good. I am always a big believer in equity, diversity and hearing from all sides. Additionally, I hope the autism advocacy grant is included in the final bill. As you have heard the ADDM numbers from CDC were recently released; sadly, autism has increased in all communities. It is always high in the Somali community, and we need to ensure parents are supported with agencies that reflect them. Noor, I hope you keep your promise to Somali autism parents in this area as your district has the highest autism rate in the state. Waxaan rajaynayaa in aad oofasid balantii aad autism waalidiinta la gashay.

Once again, thanks for your time and for considering and including autism in this legislation.

Idil Abdull, Somali Autism Mom & Advocate