

J S Clapper Testimony – HF 439
1 Feb 2021

To: Minnesota House Labor, Industry, Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Committee

Chairman Ecklund and members of the Committee:

My name is Jim Clapper. I am a **parent** of a young man with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, who receives MA waived support for residential and employment services. Thank you for taking my testimony.

My son, Bob, has been happily employed since 2008 in a number of positions, all made possible under the provisions of **section 14(c)** of the Fair Labor & Standards Act. He started his employment in a center based employment program, doing light assembly and packaging work in a Day Training and Habilitation program near our home. His wages at that time were about \$2.35/hr which were **commensurate with his level of productivity**. This is about 35% of what the minimum wage was at that time. Today, he works on a mobile work crew **in the community** at Kowalskis and earns \$7.88/hr which is about 85% of the current applicable minimum wage and again, **commensurate with his level of productivity**. He has almost *tripled* his productivity in this time and moved from a center based employment setting to a community based employment setting, and we are very proud of his progress. Bob is very proud of himself too, even though he does not have a firm grasp of money. His income helps support his food and living expenses, and **does reduce his support costs** from other State and Federal entitlements.

The 14(c) provisions provided Bob with **choices** and **opportunities** to start his employment and then steadily develop his skills and work ethic over the last 13 years. If the restrictions of HF439 had been in place in 2008, he would have had only “life enrichment” activities in his Day Training & Habilitation program. In addition, customers that contract out this work would have moved away from Disability Employment programs in order to compete. Bob’s story represents about 7000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are thriving under the provisions of 14(c) **and will lose their employment** if HF439 passes.

On behalf of my son, Bob I ask you to **reject HF439**. Not only will this bill reduce employment opportunities, it will establish another expensive and bureaucratic process which will be redundant with what already exists. I implore you to avoid fixing something that is not broken. **Commensurate wages using the 14(c) provisions work.**

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify.

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