



February 8, 2023

To: Members of the House Human Services Policy Committee  
RE: House File 1043, House File 1067

Dear Chair Fisher and Committee Members:

We write on behalf of the Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) and the Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP), two statewide projects of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. MDLC serves as the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organization for Minnesota, one of 49 other state P&As federally designed under a Congressional act. MDLC provides free legal services to children and adults with disabilities in Minnesota. LSAP is the advocacy arm of Legal Aid and has provided legislative and administrative advocacy on behalf of Legal Aid's clients and all low-income Minnesotans since 1977. We write to share our support for two bills that would advance the rights and lives of people who have disabilities.

House File 1043 would create a needed opportunity for stakeholders across the state to tackle a major problem facing people who use disability services across the state: how difficult it often is to navigate the processes to get those services. People often face accessibility barriers in assessments, eligibility, paperwork, limited communication options to interact with county workers, repeated appeals, and other roadblocks that both made it harder for them to access services and the whole service system more administratively burdensome and complex. HF 1043 will center the experiences of people who have disabilities who navigate these systems and create an opportunity for stakeholders to develop solutions to these barriers. Our disability services systems should be fully accessible to the people they exist to support, and we look forward to the commonsense solutions we anticipate this task force's work will result in for our state. This will not only make it easier for people who have disabilities to access the supports they need to live and work in their communities and direct their own choices, but it will also remove unnecessary and administratively burdensome processes from our systems as a whole. We urge you to advance this important legislation.

House File 1067 a bill that would reinstate community access for people who use Minnesota's PCA program. Now, more than ever, many people who use the PCA program need the support of their PCAs to support them with transportation. Making transportation an Instrumental Activity of Daily Living will ensure that people can use their already authorized services in a person-centered way to get to work, medical appointments, or other needed activities in the community. Given the severe lack of transportation assistance and options across the state, allowing people to use their PCA hours to help them access the community is consistent and necessary to meet Olmstead goals. It

would also bring the PCA program participants on par with waiver recipients, whose direct support staff can bill for time spent driving. This is a needed change and we urge you to support it.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important issue facing Minnesotans who have disabilities. We hope you will advance these important proposals to improve the lives of people who have disabilities across Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Purrington', with a stylized, cursive script.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ellen Smart', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ellen Smart  
*Staff Attorney*  
*Legal Services Advocacy Project*