



March 23, 2022

To: Chair Schultz and Members of the House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee
Re: HF 35 and HF 4273

Dear Chair Schultz and Members of the House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee:

The Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) and Minnesota Disability Law Center appreciate the opportunity to share our support of HF 35 and HF 4273. The Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) and the Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) are statewide projects of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. MDLC serves as the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organization for Minnesota, and, along with every other state and territory, is the largest network of legally based advocacy services for people with disabilities in the United States. MDLC provides free legal services to children and adults with disabilities. LSAP is a statewide division of Legal Aid, providing policy advocacy on issues affecting low-wealth Minnesotans, children, seniors, and Minnesotans with disabilities in legislative and administrative forums.

We write in support of two bills before the committee today – HF 4273 and HF 35. HF 4273 is the product of months of collaboration among people who use the Medicaid for Employed People with Disabilities (MA-EPD) who came together to identify needed improvements to this important program. MA-EPD is a key way for people who have disabilities to be able to both work and earn income like people who don't have disabilities, while also being eligible for needed Medicaid supports. We were very supportive of the creation of this program and now strongly support the set of improvements outlined in HF 4273. Making these changes will be an important move to ensure that people who have disabilities can continue to work and contribute to our workforce and to continue to work towards a fully inclusive society. This is particularly important amidst the current workforce shortage.

We also support HF 35, which would help to address the problem of website inaccessibility. Some of our clients with disabilities need accessibility features in order to interact with websites like folks who don't have disabilities. Now, with websites as the basis of much of our interaction, including for basic and service information from a local government, this is more important than ever. We hope that you will support local governments to ensure that their websites are accessible to all Minnesotans.

Thank you so much for your leadership on behalf of Minnesotans with disabilities; we appreciate the opportunity to share our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maren Hulden".

Maren Hulden
Staff Attorney