May 13, 2022

The Honorable Zach Stephenson
Chair, Commerce Finance and Policy Committee

The Honorable Eric R. Pratt
Chair, Jobs and Economic Growth Finance and Policy Committee

The Honorable Gary H. Dahms,
Chair, Commerce and Consumer Protection Finance and Policy Committee

The Honorable Mohamud Noor
Chair, Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy Committee

> **Re: Transparency in Licensing Bill, Senate File 3036 (Koran)/House File 3403 (Stephenson) Included in Senate File 4091, 1st Unofficial Engrossment, Article 28, Section 50**

Dear Chair Pratt, Chair Dahms, Chair Stephenson, Chair Noor, and Conferees,

I'm writing on behalf of the Minnesota Asset Building Coalition (MABC) to urge you to include the **Transparency in Licensing Bill** in your Conference Committee Report. MABC is a statewide coalition of 135 nonprofit organizations working together to create asset building opportunities and remove barriers to economic mobility. We're grateful to Chair Stephenson and Senator Koran for taking the lead on this bill, and to Chair Pratt and Chair Dahms for hearing the bill in their committees.

The Transparency in Licensing Bill requires state licensing agencies to create a uniform, pre-clearance process for individuals to request a determination about whether their criminal record affects their eligibility for a professional or occupational license. Individuals may submit a pre-clearance application prior to investing in the training or educational requirements for licensure. Determinations must be made in writing and are binding in most circumstances. Nineteen other states already have a pre-clearance process in place.

MABC supports Transparency in Licensing because one of our priorities is to remove barriers to work for justice-involved individuals. Nearly a third of Americans have a criminal record, and these individuals face multiple challenges to finding and keeping employment. Professional or occupational licensure is the first step on many vocational paths that lead to high-demand, good paying jobs, and it is well documented that family-supporting, stable employment is associated with lower recidivism and other positive reentry outcomes.

The bill does not change any criteria or standards to qualify for licensure; it merely allows individuals to find out, prior to completing the requirements for licensure, whether their criminal record alone is disqualifying. Transparency in Licensing creates opportunities for justice-involved individuals, benefits businesses that need qualified, licensed workers, and supports public safety. Please support this important measure.

Sincerely,

Anna Odegaard
Director, Minnesota Asset Building Coalition