

February 22, 2023

Re: HF 1384



Dear Chair Fischer and Human Services Policy Committee Members,

Founded by parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in 1946, The Arc Minnesota is a statewide nonprofit advocacy organization that promotes and protects the human rights of individuals with IDD, supporting them and their families in a lifetime of full inclusion and participation in their communities. We are a chapter of The Arc of the United States, the largest national community-based organization advocating for people with IDD and their families.

The Arc Minnesota strongly supports HF 1384 which takes aim at the same fundamentally unacceptable practice of taxing disability. The bill would make transformational changes that would align our policies with Minnesota's values and directly benefit working Minnesotans with disabilities.

HF 1384 would make long overdue changes to the Medical Assistance for Employed People with Disabilities (MA-EPD) program. For over 20 years now, the MA-EPD program has provided an opportunity for Minnesotans with disabilities to work while accessing critical services and supports through MA. While this program was created to boost employment for people with disabilities, the asset limit, premiums, and administrative burdens are a significant barrier to employment and keep people with disabilities living in poverty. Many accessing the program face financial distress as they are under a constant threat of losing their safety net supports.

Policies that force working people with disabilities to live in poverty in order to access services and supports are dehumanizing. They imply that people with disabilities do not deserve financial stability, let alone prosperity. Administrative processes that monitor this program take away money that could be spent to improve services. They create barriers to economic stability and put an unnecessary burden on people accessing services. When people with disabilities are barely allowed to survive, they are not allowed to thrive and flourish as valued and respected members of society.

The Arc Minnesota encourages the committee to pass HF 1384 to end the additional tax on working Minnesotans with disabilities. Please let people with disabilities get beyond just surviving and move on to thriving. We will all benefit from their prosperity.

Thank you, Rep. Hicks, for carrying a bill that would be life-changing to so many Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Julia Page  
Public Policy Director