



City of Rochester
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February 9, 2023

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing this letter in support of The Children's Museum of Rochester's bills SF725 and HF 1023. The Children's Museum of Rochester, Inc, doing business as SPARK, is in Economic Development Region 10 of Southeast Minnesota. They serve a population of 519,399 people in this region, according to 2021 MN State Demographic Center.

These bills seek to provide funding that builds upon successful initiatives funded with previous appropriations from the Minnesota Department of Education. This funding would increase access and engagement for diverse audiences through museum programs and exhibits that promote Minnesota arts, culture, and history. Funding children's museums this session will direct resources to impact children, families, and our Southeast Minnesota communities when it's needed more than ever.

At their core, children's museums are about serving ALL children with high-quality learning experiences and supportive resources. They are indispensable educational, cultural, and economic development assets that understand the needs of our youngest citizens, they strengthen the bonds between families and their communities, spur economic development, and improve Minnesota's rural quality of life.

Your support will have a statewide impact because Rochester's Children's Museum, SPARK, has served visitors from every single county in Minnesota this past year. They are poised to reach more than 100,000 visitors this year, serving their local residents and area visitors. State funding to support SPARK will provide direct resources to the needs of children, families, and their communities, and expand their capacity and increase long-range impact and improve Greater Minnesota's livability for generations to come.

I encourage you to lend your support and leadership in passing SF725 and HF1023 for the Children's Museum of Rochester, Inc.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kim Norton'.

Kim Norton, Mayor
City of Rochester, Minnesota
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