



April 8, 2022

To: Members of the House Committee on Human Services Finance and Policy  
RE: House File 4579

Dear Chair Schultz and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House File 4579 – the Human Services Finance and Policy Omnibus Bill. Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS) is grateful for your ongoing efforts to recommend and implement policy that provides practical solutions and strengthens resources for our neighbors.

LSS is a provider of essential services across all 87 counties with more than 2,500 employees and 10,000 volunteers serving 1 in 65 Minnesotans every year. We are committed to innovative, person-centered service delivery that promotes resiliency and long-term stability for people in all stages of life. We support policies that improve access to service, build community connection and remove barriers to health and well-being for our neighbors. Thank you, again, for the opportunity to express our strong support of the following provisions:

- **Strengthening the Home and Community-Based Workforce.** We strongly support policies that invest in community-based nonprofits to recruit, retain and develop the social service and caregiving field. The proposed establishment of workforce incentive grants to fund education, child care, and transportation will result in growth and career advancement within the human services field.
- **Developing a Life Sharing Service Model (HF3919).** Thank you for the inclusion of engaging stakeholders and the Department of Human Services to develop recommendations for establishing Life Sharing as a covered medical assistance waiver service. This work is critical to removing barriers and increasing access to this person-centered, community-based and culturally responsive support for Minnesotans with disabilities.
- **Increasing Investment in Homeless Youth Act Grants (HF3263) and Safe Harbor Grants (HF3599).** Thank you for making updates and new investments that will strengthen resources for programs that effectively and holistically support the needs of resilient youth experiencing homelessness or sexual exploitation.
- **Shelter-Linked Mental Health (HF3613).** Investing in shelter-linked mental health will support community-based providers to offer a continuum of integrated services. LSS has seen first-hand that these funds are critical to breaking through the barriers and stigma associated with traditional mental health services.
- **Strengthening the Mental Health Workforce (HF3418).** We strongly support policies that eliminate systemic barriers and diversify our workforce to better meet the growing mental



health needs of Minnesotans. These provisions are a critical step to ensuring that our workforce and mental health care system is meeting the needs of Minnesota's diverse communities by removing barriers and creating equitable pathways to the mental health profession.

LSS is thankful for your thoughtful leadership and support of neighbors helping neighbors. If we can be of service or provide additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

Erin Sutton, MSW, LGSW  
Senior Director of Advocacy  
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota  
[erin.sutton@lssmn.org](mailto:erin.sutton@lssmn.org)  
c: 612-708-5703