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March 16, 2023

Chair Jay Xiong
557 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Xiong and Members of the House Workforce Committee:

On behalf of the Career Solutions Workforce Development board (Stearns and Benton Counties), I am writing in support of HF2127, a bill that will add much needed funding to the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP). MYP is integral to serving young people in our area who face barriers to education and employment opportunities.

With MYP funding, we offer CareerONE, a summer youth employment camp for 175 youth in Stearns and Benton Counties. This program is a half million-dollar program with \$150,000 going out to students (ages 14-17) as a work stipend. We started this 20-day summer camp with MN Youth Program (MYP) funding from the legislature which is enough to cover the cost of 35-40 students. We've fundraised and written other grants to grow the program to the size it is today and greatly enhanced the experience (i.e. all participants earning at least one college credit).

The demand for this camp is high! We are only able to accept half of the applications received every year. To grow our program, we need additional resources to create a second camp site as we are at capacity in our current location (held on the St. Cloud Technical and Community College Campus). Additional MYP funds would help us take our program to the next level and expand the number of camp participants.

We also support increasing the age of eligibility from 16-21 to 16-24. This mirrors other youth workforce development programs' age of eligibility and will allow greater flexibility for co-enrollment to leverage multiple funding streams.

We appreciate Representative Sencer-Mura's leadership on this bill and encourage the committee to support investment in youth programming via the Minnesota Youth Program.

Sincerely,

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