

March 21, 2023

Chair Noor and House Human Services Finance Committee Members:

Hello I am Dana and I have a disability. My work story is this: I worked with four people with disabilities (an enclave) in Rochester at a hotel. I cleaned rooms and staff were there too. I liked my job and I liked going to work but it was hard work. When I started I was paid less than \$3 per hour. I tried hard and thought when I learned the work I would get paid more. I did work my way up to over \$3.35. After several year working, I lost interest and it got harder to work. One day staff said I was too slow and they lowered my pay to almost \$2 per hour. I didn't want to work anymore.

I wanted to try something different in my town but my staff didn't believe I had the skills to work at a real job. So, I left. Through COVID I stayed home until Vocational Rehab was able to do in person meetings and I learned what other jobs I might be able to try. Michelle (my new staff) helped me find a new job in Rochester at the Hilton Garden Hotel. I like working with them and they pay me \$12.50 per hour. I started with cleaning rooms and it was hard. Michelle and my hotel supervisor customized my job to cleaning hallways and other areas of the hotel and it is going better. I work with all the housekeeping staff. I am a regular employee and have to listen to my boss. But now I get to go to hotel work parties and lunch meetings and be a part of the staff. My job coach stops by once a week to check on me and makes sure I have what I need and I am doing my work. She talks to my supervisor to make sure they think I am doing a good job. I want to work so I can have my own apartment. I wanted a dog. Mom says I have to pay for it so I need to work.

I deserved to be paid for my work like other people. Please support paying people with disabilities like me. I support of the provisions in HF 2847 to increase wages for people with disabilities by phasing out subminimum wage in Minnesota. People with disabilities like me support this provision. We matter and deserve to be paid.

Thank you,

Dana

Dana Wiersma

Rochester, MN

