



April 22, 2020

To: Members of the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee
RE: HF 3104, A-20

Chair Moran and Members,

Thank you for your leadership during these challenging times. We write on behalf of the Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) and the Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP), which are statewide projects of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. MDLC serves as the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organization for Minnesota, one of 57 P&A's federally designed under a Congressional act. MDLC provides free legal services to children and adults with disabilities in Minnesota. LSAP is the advocacy arm of Legal Aid and has provided legislative and administrative advocacy on behalf of Legal Aid's clients and all low-income Minnesotans since 1977.

We write to note our support of several provisions in HF 3104, A-20. Thank you so much for your work on this comprehensive bill. First, with regard to the provisions in Article 3, sections 21 and 22 addressing state-operated community-based programs, we appreciate Representative Jordan and the Department of Human Services consulting with our attorneys to ensure that residents' rights are protected and that people will not lose access to needed programs.

Second, we strongly support expanding the Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota (FAIM) program to include vehicles and modifying it to adjust to changes in the federal program. This is a tremendously helpful program for low-income Minnesotans, and these changes will be significant improvements.

There are several other provisions in this bill that will help people with disabilities access and use state disability services and supports:

- Article 2, Section 3: Setting timelines for service planning and adding requirements about the contents of service plans are critical steps to ensuring that people live integrated and meaningful lives.
- Article 3, Section 3: Expanding eligibility for respite care for children with emotional disturbances greatly benefits children with disabilities and their families.
- Article 3, Section 20: This change will help ensure that people have the right to interact with others in the community, which is an essential component of Minnesota's *Olmstead* commitments.

- Article 3, Sections 37-43: These improvements to the Early Intensive Developmental and Behavioral Intervention (EIDBI) benefit improve service access and increase protections for children receiving these important services.
- Article 4: We support the changes to Minnesota's civil commitment statute. We were part of the task force that worked to develop consensus on this set of changes and are encouraged to see these important improvements moving toward implementation.

Thank you for your leadership during these challenging times. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this comprehensive bill and are available for further questions or discussion.

Sincerely,

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