

The Honorable Jason Rarick

Feb. 26, 2015

431 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, Mn 55155

Rep. Rarick,

I am writing this in support of HF173. As member of the Mora community with a parent and an uncle living in the St. Clares Living Community, one of two nursing homes in this community I can assure that my family is very happy with the care that my dad and uncle are receiving but we worry that this may not continue if the nursing homes continue to have trouble hiring staff due to lower wages. If this problem continues and the homes have to downsize more we may be forced to move my father who has Alzheimer's to another facility 35 to 50 miles away. This would create a hardship on my mother who is 82 and limits her driving. The rest of my family is still working and it would be difficult for them to visit both parents in one trip. Also this would be a real hardship on my father in that the move would further his confusion and make his illness more stressful.

I am also a member of the City Council and can tell you that St. Clares provides 127 jobs in Kanabec County, with a payroll of over \$2.6 million dollars and in this area that puts our nursing homes in the top 10 of employers. With Kanabec County, the second highest county in unemployment at 8.7% and our health care wages too low to compete with metro area homes in recruiting nurses and aids it is difficult to staff the facilities. The biggest challenge is yet to come with an aging community and our youth leaving to work in the metro for higher wages. Mora and the area needs these facilities so that our families don't have to move their loved ones to facilities in the cities or Duluth or St. Cloud making visits more difficult. I would hate to see the nursing homes have to close because of a shortage. We have already lost our rehab center due to nursing shortage and we need to have these facilities available. If this bill will help by enhancing the reimbursement rates for our area and bringing us in line with the metro and St. Cloud I have to support it so that we can keep jobs in our community. Knowing that this is your bill I hope this helps in it's passage.

Sincerely

Alan Skramstad

Mora City Councilman

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