



COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

1600 University Avenue W, Suite 8, St. Paul, MN 55104

651-361-7800 | www.disability.state.mn.us

Honorable Chair Representative Gene Pelowski
House Higher Education Finance and Policy Committee
RE: HF 4656 – MN Rise Act
March 19th, 2024

Chair Pelowski and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

The Minnesota Council on Disability would like to express our enthusiastic support for HF 4656, the Minnesota Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (MN RISE) Act, introduced by Representative Hanson. This pivotal legislation addresses critical barriers faced by college students with disabilities, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable post-secondary educational environment.

Currently, college students with disabilities encounter numerous obstacles that significantly impede their ability to enroll, succeed, and graduate. Notably, approximately 63% of students with disabilities opt not to disclose their condition, thus forgoing vital resources and accommodations. This reluctance is compounded by the lack of clear information on how to access such services and the prohibitive cost and availability of required evaluations. Not getting essential accommodations and supports is the number one reason students with disabilities do not finish their tertiary education.

The MN RISE Act supports students with disabilities through provisions such as expanding the criteria for what constitutes acceptable documentation of disability, ensuring more students can establish their eligibility for accommodations without undue burden. Moreover, it mandates that institutions of higher education develop and disseminate transparent policies regarding disability services, thereby fostering a more supportive and accessible educational landscape.

It should be noted that Subd. 5 of HF 4656 is entirely student driven and reflects the experience of real Minnesotan students with disabilities who are currently enrolled in Minnesotan higher education institutions.

The significance of the MN RISE Act cannot be overstated. By eliminating common barriers for students with disabilities, the act not only facilitates greater participation of students with disabilities in higher education but also promotes their acceptance as valued members of the campus community. The envisioned reforms are expected to enhance enrollment, self-disclosure rates, persistence, and completion rates among students with disabilities, contributing to their overall success in their careers.

Thank you for your support for HF 4656 – The MN RISE Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trevor Turner".

Trevor Turner
Public Policy Director
trevor.turner@state.mn.us

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Dively".

David Dively
Executive Director
david.dively@state.mn.us



COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

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Led by Minnesota State University students, we are the inclusive voice for all future, current, and former students. We actively work to represent and support Minnesota State University students and advocate at a local, system, state, and federal level for higher education policies that make a positive impact for our students and communities.

Students United would like to express their full support for HF 4656 – The MN RISE Act.



March 14, 2024

Chairman Gene Pelowski, Jr.
491 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Vice Chairman Dan Wolgamott
401 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Republican Lead Marion Rarick
357 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairman Pelowski, Vice Chairman Wolgamott, and Republican Lead Rarick,

On behalf of the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), we urge you to pass House File (HF) 4565 out of the House Higher Education Finance and Policy Committee so that Minnesota college students with disabilities can better access needed disability services, which includes reasonable academic accommodations. NCLD is the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that individuals with learning disabilities have the support, tools, and resources they need to succeed in school, work, and life.

HF 4565 is an important bill that would streamline the process to qualify for disability services and require colleges to accept a variety of forms of documentation of a disability, including an Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 Plan, notice from a doctor, or evaluation by a psychologist. Many students with disabilities receive accommodations throughout Pre-K–12 education, but when they transition to college they must navigate new and often burdensome requirements for documentation of their disability. College students with disabilities are often saddled with a maze of new and frequently costly requirements to "prove" that they have a disability to access disability services. Many students must pay out-of-pocket (\$500-\$2,500+) for new psychoeducational evaluations to demonstrate they indeed have a disability, despite their well-documented history of having accommodations or supports for their disability in their IEP or 504 plan.

In addition to these financial barriers, prospective colleges often have different information available about their disability services and what documentation will be accepted in order to obtain services and accommodations. At all public institutions that offer a bachelor's degree in Minnesota,¹ formally registered undergraduate students with disabilities comprise anywhere between 3% or fewer (Minnesota State University-Moorhead, Saint Cloud State University, and Southwest Minnesota State University) and 17% (University of Minnesota-Morris)² of the student

¹ Bemidji State University, Fon du Lac Community College, Metro State University, Minnesota State University-Moorhead, Minnesota State University-Mankato, Saint Cloud State University, Southwest Minnesota State University, University of Minnesota-Crookston, University of Minnesota-Duluth, University of Minnesota-Morris, University of Minnesota-Rochester, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, and Winona State University.

² Source: IPEDS Data in College Navigator



population. These disparities suggest that colleges differ in how accessible their disability services are, which is also evident by comparing policies and documentation requirements available on their websites.

HF 4565 expands access for students with disabilities to ensure they have what they need to succeed. We strongly urge you to vote in favor of this piece of legislation to support college students with disabilities. Please contact Lindsay Kubatzky, NCLD's Director of Policy and Advocacy at LKubatzky@nclcd.org should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jacqueline A. Rodriguez'.

Dr. Jacqueline Rodriguez
Chief Executive Officer
National Center for Learning Disabilities



Dear Members of the House Committee on Higher Education,

On behalf of the 30,000 undergraduate students our organization represents, the Undergraduate Student Government urges you to support [HF 4565](#), otherwise known as the Minnesota Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act. This proposed legislation is a monumental step forward in ensuring that our higher education system is more inclusive, accessible, and supportive for students with disabilities.

The RISE Act promises to dismantle many of the barriers that have historically impeded students with disabilities from achieving their full academic potential. For example, the RISE Act would expand the acceptable documentation an undergraduate student may use to establish that they have a disability and to be considered for accommodations. The RISE Act also requires higher education institutions to adopt transparent and explicit policies regarding disability services. This includes making the policies accessible, and sharing this information with prospective, admitted, and enrolled students, families, and faculty. This approach is not only compassionate but practical, reducing undue burdens on students and easing the process for students to receive support.

Similar legislation is being considered at the federal level, but it is crucial that Minnesota establishes its own statute in support of students with disabilities. The federal legislation is primarily budget-focused, which does not make sense for our policy-focused session. Minnesota's RISE Act is tailored to address the limitations of current state statutes, and will best support Minnesota students.

We are asking for your support in updating the existing policy to create an inclusive environment where all students, regardless of their background or disabilities, can access the resources and support they need. The clear communication standards that the RISE Act would allow students to have a full understanding of what accommodations they would receive should they attend a higher education institution.

In closing, we urge you to support the RISE Act. Its passage will signal a significant advancement in our commitment to equity and inclusion in higher education. By supporting this Act, we are not only upholding the rights of students with disabilities but are also investing in a more diverse, innovative, and successful future for our entire community.

Sincerely,

The University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Undergraduate Student Government

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

Institute on Community Integration (UCEDD)

2025 East River Parkway

MIDB

College of Education and Human Development

Minneapolis, MN 55414

Office: 612-624-6300

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March 15, 2024

Letter of Support HF 4565
Senate Higher Education Committee

Chair Pelowski and Committee Members,

I am writing this letter in support of HF4565, the Minnesota RISE Act, which updates Minnesota statute 135A.16. The statute was passed into law in 1991 and has not been updated since. The legislation increases the consistency across colleges and universities by requiring clear and accessible policies that outline the procedures and process for students with a disability to self-disclose their disability, initiate the interactive process and arrange for accommodations that provide equitable access. It will ease the transition students with a disability experience from K-12 where the school districts initiate the process to postsecondary education when the responsibility shifts to the student to initiate the process for accommodations.

The legislation expands what documentation institutions of higher education accept for determining the student's accommodations. This prevents students with a disability having to go through the time-consuming and expensive process of obtaining a new evaluation to re-prove a disability. By removing barriers students with a disability face, institutions of higher education encourage students with a disability to pursue a post secondary education and reduce the burden many students with a disability experience when navigating new and difficult procedures just to prove they have a disability in order to access the accommodations that they need.

Disabilities are lifelong. Students with a disability are capable of success when afforded the proper support. Students with a disability may face new challenges as they transition to higher education and new experiences. This is not a change in their disability, but a potential change in their accommodation needs. This is why it is important for a transparent interactive process that allows for reviewing and adjusting a student's accommodations.

The Institute on Community Integration (ICI) believes that passing HF4565 will address common barriers faced by college students with a disability leading to increased enrollment, self-disclosure rates, and persistence and attainment rates of college students with a disability. As such, ICI encourages the committee to support HF4565.

Sincerely,



Amy Hewitt, Director and Professor
Institute on Community Integration



March 15, 2024

The Honorable Gene Pelowski
Chair, Higher Education Committee
Minnesota House
491 State Office Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Marion Rarick
Ranking Minority Member, Higher Education Committee
Minnesota House
357 State Office Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Legal Aid letter of support for HF 4565

Dear Chair Pelowski, Ranking Minority Member Rarick, and Members of the Committee:

The Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) and the Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) write in support of HF 4565, the Minnesota Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act. The RISE Act will help Minnesota colleges and universities comply with the legal requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Minnesota Human Rights Act to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are often necessary to afford students with disabilities meaningful access to the educational services offered by colleges and universities, and the RISE Act establishes policies, procedures, and processes that will ensure that these reasonable accommodations are provided.

Making clear that certain documents are sufficient to establish that a student is a person with a disability will create consistency across colleges and universities and simplify the process for both students and schools. Requiring one office to be responsible for disseminating student accommodation plans would save students and instructors time as well as not require students to go over their personal (and sometimes sensitive) information multiple times per quarter or semester. This would save both students and instructors time as well.

Legal Aid Letter re: HF 4565

March 15, 2024

Speaking as a parent of a former University of Minnesota student with accommodations, I (Ellen Smart) can attest that my daughter's experiences with the U of M's Disability Resource Center were very helpful. However, my daughter had an instructor who told her she was not allowed to use the accommodations she had approved through the Center in her class. Having the plans come directly from the Center would lend credibility to the plans and require instructors to follow them or document the reasons why they will not, which will likely act as a deterrent to refusing accommodations.

It is important to note that this statute will not violate student privacy as each student will need to give permission for their information to be shared with their instructors. Moreover, the RISE Act will work in tandem with existing anti-discrimination laws to help create an environment where students with disabilities can succeed in higher education. To clarify how these laws would work together, LSAP and MDLC recommend adding language that states that the RISE Act does not limit any of the rights or remedies that are available under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Thank you for allowing us to submit input on HF 4565.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Purrington
Legal Director/Deputy Director
Minnesota Disability Law Center



Ellen Smart
Staff Attorney
Legal Services Advocacy Project

This document has been formatted for accessibility. Please call Ellen Smart at 612/746-3761 if you need this document in an alternative format.



Written Testimony of
Autism Society of America and Autism Society of Minnesota
Submitted to Minnesota House Committee on Higher Education Finance and Policy

March 18, 2024

Autism Society of America
6110 Executive Boulevard, Suite 305
Rockville, Maryland 20852
1 (800) 328-8476

Autism Society of Minnesota
2380 Wycliff St. #102
St. Paul, MN 55114
651.647.1083

Dear Chairman Pelowski and other members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding HF 4565, the Minnesota Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act. This bill would increase access to higher education for the disability community, and we fully support it.

The Autism Society of America is the nation's oldest and largest grassroots organization representing individuals on the Autism spectrum and their families. The Autism Society envisions a world where individuals and families living with Autism can maximize their quality of life, are treated with the highest level of dignity, and live in a society where their talents and skills are appreciated and valued. Along with our 70+ affiliates nationwide, we provide advocacy, education, information and referral, support, and community engagement opportunities at national, state, and local levels. Our Minnesota affiliate, the Autism Society of Minnesota, or AUSM, has served Minnesota since 1971 by offering membership, workshops, the Minnesota autism conference, AuSM Skillshops, individualized consultation, specially tailored summer camps for youth and adults with autism, interest-based social skills classes with community partners, Counseling and Consulting Services, support groups, Autism Direct Support Certification training, sensory-friendly events, advocacy, Information and Resources, and customized autism training.

House File 4565 would streamline the process to qualify for disability services and require state-supported universities and colleges to accept a variety of forms of documentation of a disability, including an Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 Plan, notice from a doctor, or evaluation by a psychologist. Currently, many schools require a new evaluation by a psychologist. The cost of an evaluation for an individual with a learning disability can range between \$500 and \$2,500. (Source: LDA) For an individual with Autism, the costs can range between \$500 to several thousand dollars. In addition, the waitlist to obtain a new evaluation can be over 4 months long (CMS). Lastly, if the individual is an out-of-state student, it can be difficult to find a highly qualified provider. The bill would also mandate that colleges follow an

interactive and transparent process when students are working with the disability office to discuss accommodations that are best suited for them. Assessments are hard to access due to their high cost, scarcity, and time-consuming nature. It is important to note that an IEP plan is no more than 3 years old as reevaluation is required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act every 3 years. In addition, the IEP will not be copied as accommodations can be much different in college. This bill simply allows the IEP or 504 plan to be accepted as proof of disability so that the college and the student can then begin the process of discussing best accommodations.

The CDC found that in 2023, 1 in 36 children in the U.S. have Autism, up from 1 in 44 in 2022. However, only 1 in 225 college students report having Autism (College Autism Network). The postsecondary completion rates for students with Autism are significantly lower at 39 percent than that of their peers in the general population being 59 percent or even compared to that for students with all types of disabilities, being 50 percent (NIH, 2021). Part of this is due to the barriers to receiving the necessary accommodations individuals are entitled to so they can access the curriculum. I serve the MN Autism community as the lobbyist for the Autism Society of MN, it is often assumed that this came with an intense education background that prepared me for this role, but in fact, I have not completed a bachelors degree because of barriers to accessibility and accommodations. The areas that I thrived in were due to thoughtful and compassionate professors that understand that disability is part of diversity. Unfortunately that didn't extend to all required subjects needed to complete a degree and as such I wasn't able to complete my degree. The accommodations I needed were simple. Notes before a lecture, which is incredibly simple with power point, quiet test taking spaces, and a regular group or partner for group projects because of social anxiety. These are not things that should have prevented my graduation due to the prerogative of professors, these are things that are reasonable accommodations.

In conclusion, the disparity in autism prevalence between children and college students, coupled with lower postsecondary completion rates among students with autism, highlights the need to address barriers that stop students from getting the critical accommodations that they need in school. We look forward to working with the legislature to make this necessary change. Thank you for considering the testimony of the Autism Society as this bill moves forward. If you have any questions, please contact Delancy Allred, State Policy Coordinator at dallred@autism-society.org, or Jillian Nelson, Community Resource and Policy Advocate at jnelson@ausm.org.

Written TESTIMONY OF Dupree Edwards

Crystal, Minnesota

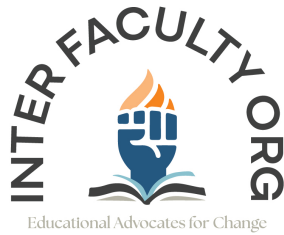
Chair Pelowski and members:

My name is Dupree Edwards. I am providing written testimony today in support of House File 4565, the Minnesota RISE Act.

In 2019, I enrolled in a two-year college, but it did not work out. I was interested in taking some acting classes several years after graduating high school. Asking for accommodations for my disability was confusing, and I could not find any specific instructions on what to do. I was told to provide a copy of my IEP. I talked to the Disability Resource Services staff, and they decided what accommodations they would provide. The accommodations that were offered were not what I needed. I ended up dropping my classes.

Despite my first college experience, I still want to go to college. I believe that House File 4565 will help colleges provide clear information about disability services and the steps to get the accommodations that students with a disability need.

I ask for your support of House File 4565 for The Minnesota RISE Act. Thank you.



Minnesota House Higher Education Committee
The Honorable Gene Pelowski
491 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 14, 2024

Chair Pelowski,

We submit this letter to express faculty support for the HF4565, the Minnesota RISE Act. This bill will enhance the academic success and overall well-being of higher education students in Minnesota. MinnState faculty are dedicated to ensuring inclusive education and equal opportunities for all. We believe this bill is a significant step forward in creating a more equitable and supportive learning environment for students who often face undue challenges in pursuit of their educational goals.

The Minnesota RISE Act acknowledges the unique barriers that students with disabilities encounter and provides an expansion of acceptable documentation that a college student may provide to establish they have a disability in college and for consideration of accommodations. In addition, it requires institutions of higher education to adopt transparent and explicit policies regarding disability services, making the policies accessible and sharing the information to prospective, admitted, and enrolled students, families, and faculty. Our campuses already attempt to do this and some do it better than others. This bill will help create basic standards for campuses to use while developing their own policies and communication opportunities.

Students with disabilities are an integral part of our academic community, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure they are not left behind. By implementing the provisions of the Minnesota RISE Act, we are taking a crucial step towards leveling the playing field and enabling these students to pursue their educational aspirations without the added burden of navigating a system that does not fully accommodate their needs.

Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of students with disabilities, ensuring they have the support and resources they need to excel and achieve their full potential.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Kevin Lindstrom
President, MN State College Faculty

Jenna Chernega
President, Inter Faculty Organization

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

National Center for College Students with Disabilities
Institute on Community Integration (UCEDD)
2025 East River Parkway - MIDB Building
College of Education and Human Development
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Office: 612-624-6300 Fax: 612-624-9344
Web: <http://ici.umn.edu>

March 18, 2024

Letter of Support HF 4565
House Higher Education Committee

Chair Pelowski and Committee Members,

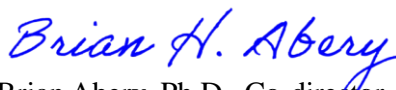
On behalf of the National Center for College Students with Disabilities, I ask that you pass HF4565, the Minnesota RISE Act. The legislation replaces Minnesota statute 135A.16 that was passed into law in 1991 and has not been updated since. HF4565 increases the consistency across colleges and universities by requiring clear and accessible policies that outline the procedures and process for students with a disability to self-disclose their disability, initiate the interactive process of being recognized by their institution of higher education as having a disability, and arrange for accommodations that provide equitable access. Clear and transparent policies will ease the transition students with a disability experience from K-12, where the school districts initiate the support process, to postsecondary education when the responsibility shifts to the student to ensure that they have access to necessary accommodations.

The proposed legislation expands the documentation institutions of higher education require for determining a student's accommodations. This allows students with a disability to avoid the time-consuming and expensive process of obtaining a new evaluation to re-prove that they continue to experience a disability. By removing barriers students with a disabilities face, institutions of higher education have the opportunity to encourage young adults and adults with disabilities to pursue a post-secondary education, experience a sense of belonging in the campus community. This also reduces student hesitancy to request and utilize accommodations and lessens the burden many students experience when navigating new and difficult procedures in order to access the accommodations that they need.

Most disabilities are lifelong. Students with a disability are capable learners and utilizing accommodations should not diminish their feelings of self-sufficiency or academic success. Students with disabilities already face multiple challenges as they transition to higher education. Let us remove an existing barrier to making this a positive experience and make it easier for them to ensure that their accommodation needs are met. This is why it is important to have in place a transparent, interactive process that allows for reviewing and adjusting a student's accommodations without undue barriers.

The National Center for College Students with Disabilities supports the passage of HF4565 to improve clarity of disability resource policies and procedures and address common barriers faced by college students with a disability. Please pass HF4565.

Sincerely,



Brian Abery, Ph.D., Co-director
National Center for College Students with Disabilities



March 11, 2024

Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Consortium
Minnesota Council on Disability
1600 University Avenue W, Suite 8
St. Paul, MN 55104

Dear Ms. Hauff,

On behalf of Proof Alliance, please accept this letter of support for the **Minnesota Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act, HF 4565/SF 4525.**

I write to you as the Executive Director at Proof Alliance, the Minnesota-based nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing prenatal alcohol exposure and supporting all impacted by fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). In Minnesota, 13.1% of pregnancies are exposed to alcohol. That means an estimated 8,755 babies are born with prenatal alcohol exposure each year in Minnesota. Proof Alliance is dedicated to supporting youth and families impacted by fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). We recognize the significance of inclusive higher education opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including those with FASD, and we commend the efforts of the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Consortium and the Minnesota Council on Disability in advocating for the MN RISE Act.

The barriers faced by college students with disabilities are concerning and highlight the urgent need for legislative action. The MN RISE Act aims to address these systematic barriers by updating existing statutes, expanding acceptable documentation for disability accommodations, and requiring institutions of higher education to adopt transparent policies regarding disability services. These measures will not only make higher education more accessible for students with disabilities but also promote their inclusion and success on college campuses.

We believe that by eliminating these barriers, the MN RISE Act will encourage more students with disabilities to pursue postsecondary education credentials, improve enrollment and completion rates, and foster a more inclusive campus environment. Additionally, the Act aligns with Proof Alliance's mission of advocating for policies and initiatives that support the well-being and success of individuals with disabilities.

Thank you for your dedication to this important cause. Should you need further information or assistance from Proof Alliance, please contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mollie O'Brien".

Mollie O'Brien, Executive Director
Proof Alliance

March 19, 2024

Re: The Arc Minnesota Letter of Support, HF 4565

Chair Pelowski and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

On behalf of The Arc Minnesota, we write today in support of House File 4565, known as the Minnesota Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act.

The Arc Minnesota is a statewide nonprofit organization that works to promote and protect the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), supporting them and their families in a lifetime of full inclusion and participation in their communities.

A key element of full inclusion and participation in community for young adults with intellectual disabilities is access to higher education opportunities. Students with intellectual disabilities who attend postsecondary education are more than twice as likely to be employed, live in homes of their own, and rely less on government programs like Supplemental Security Income and Vocational Rehabilitation. This strengthens the Minnesota workforce, reduces dependence on more formal, costly supports, and leads to long-term cost savings for the state. More importantly, it will ensure young adults with intellectual disabilities can pursue their dreams, live the life of their choice, and find belonging in their communities.

Unfortunately, though, Minnesota lagged behind some other states in the country in making higher education available for and accessible to young adults with intellectual disabilities. Last year, the state's enrollment capacity for students with intellectual disabilities was just 90-100, compared to the approximately 5000 prospective students who might be interested in pursuing higher education if they had access to do so. This demonstrated the need and the opportunity for Minnesota to join other states that have been leading on inclusive higher education in our country.

That's why we were so passionate about advocating alongside parent advocates like Mary Hauff and many others during the 2023 session, during which the legislature passed a monumental bill investing in inclusive post-secondary education that would make the dream of going to college a reality for students with intellectual disabilities throughout the state.

The commitment made by the Minnesota legislature last session was historic in establishing vital infrastructure to make inclusive higher education possible. Now, with the RISE Act, we have an opportunity to protect and expand that access.

By establishing proactive, interactive processes for determining students' reasonable accommodation needs, sharing plain language information about the range of accommodations available, allowing students to withdraw from classes if accommodations cannot be made, and more, the RISE Act will make Minnesota's post-secondary education institutions more welcoming, accessible, and inclusive of thousands of young adults with disabilities who have bright futures ahead. **Please support the RISE Act and prioritize inclusion in the higher education omnibus bill.**

Respectfully,

Tina Rucci, Public Policy Director
The Arc Minnesota

Written Testimony of Mary Hauff

Minnetonka, Minnesota

Chair Pelowski and committee members:

My name is Mary Hauff. I am testifying in support of House File 4565. I am a parent advocate and Director of the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Technical Assistance Center.

HF 4565 updates Minnesota statute and addresses systemic barriers college students with disabilities experience. The bill increases Disability Resource Service policy transparency and accessibility, shifts from disability documentation as “proof” of a disability to understanding a student’s disability and reasonable accommodation needs, and expands what “acceptable” documentation a student with a disability may provide to establish reasonable accommodations.

As a parent of four college-age adults with disabilities, I have experience supporting students with disabilities. All my children wanted to pursue a postsecondary education credential. Reasonable accommodations provide equal access. My children considered over 20 colleges and universities. The Disability Resource Services information and procedures varied and many colleges had burdensome requirements that were unwelcoming and overwhelming just to “prove” a disability in order to access reasonable accommodations. This is a contributing factor into why less than 40% of college students self-disclose a disability to seek reasonable accommodations. One of

my daughters did not request accommodations in her first year of college because she was overwhelmed by the process and uncomfortable asking for accommodations for recently identified disabilities. Another daughter considered a university until she met with their Disability Resource Services staff. They were requiring a new assessment to prove her disabilities and medical condition that were already well documented. A time-consuming and unnecessary requirement with over \$1,000 of out-of-pocket expenses.

College students with disabilities already face challenges and barriers. Disability Resource Service policies should be clear and accessible, and help students gain equal access through reasonable accommodations.

HF4565 provides an overdue update to Minnesota statute, leads to increased transparency and accessibility of disability resource policies and reduces the barriers college students face when choosing to self-disclose a disability and request reasonable accommodations. I ask for your support of House File 4565. Thank you.