



Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys Supports HF1655/SF1886

Submitted February 24, 2023

Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments in support of HF1655/SF1886. We would like to speak specifically to the portion of the bill proposing to remove the exemption for youth focused organizations that allows hiring discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Girl Scouts River Valleys is the local council of Girl Scouts of the USA, a registered 501(c)3 organization and the preeminent leadership development organization for girls. We are one of 111 Girl Scout councils that make up the national Girl Scout Movement, sharing the mission to build girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. Girl Scouts River Valleys serves over 29,000 members in southern Minnesota, western Wisconsin, and one county in Iowa.

Girl Scouts River Valleys is committed to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for every girl and her family. Girl Scouts River Valleys values diversity in all its forms and as such the employment exemption that exists under current law for youth focused organizations is contrary to our values of hiring an inclusive and diverse workforce. We support the provision in this bill removing this exemption from our state's civil rights laws. Words matter, and it is important that we take steps as a state to demonstrate our commitment to advancing equity and inclusion for all Minnesotans under the law. We applaud the Minnesota Department of Human Rights for moving us towards a more equitable Minnesota.

We ask that that you listen closely to the testimony and support HF1655/SF1886. We would be happy to further discuss the details of our support for this issue; please feel free to reach out at any time to Sara Gangelhoff, Advocacy and Community Relations Manager at Girl Scouts River Valleys, advocacy@girlscoutsrv.org.

Thank you for your service on this committee and your attention to this bill.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marisa C. Williams".

Marisa C. Williams
Chief Executive Officer
Girl Scouts River Valleys

Mission: building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

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