

May 2, 2023

The Honorable Melissa Wiklund
Chair, Senate Health and Human
Services Committee
2107 Minnesota Senate Building
90 University Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Tina Liebling
Chair, House Health Finance and
Policy Committee
477 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Wiklund and Chair Liebling, and members of the Health and Human Services Conference Committee:

I write to you as the Executive Director at Proof Alliance, the Minnesota-based nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing fetal alcohol spectrum disorder [FASD] and caring for all impacted. **I write to express our support for SF2995, the Health and Human Services Omnibus bill.**

13% of babies in Minnesota are born with prenatal alcohol exposure each year. Prenatal alcohol exposure is the leading cause of preventable birth defects in the U.S. Prenatal alcohol exposure causes FASD. **FASD is a disability with lifelong implications** that can impact brain function, development, learning, behavior, and social skills. One in 20 children in the U.S. has an FASD. That means it's likely to be in every classroom across this state.

This bill would improve the lives of people with disabilities, including people living with an FASD. This bill would also improve early identification of developmental delays, thus helping to identify prenatal alcohol exposure and provide effective interventions for children with an FASD. For example, developmental and social-emotional screening and referrals to community-based resources and support are critical to supporting people with an FASD. People living with an FASD are more likely to need foster care, PCA services, waivers, medical care, mental health care, case management and special education. The physical, mental, and emotional cost of FASD to families is devastating, and the financial cost to our state is shocking. But, if a child is screened and diagnosed early, and connected to the right interventions, resources and supports 1) the child has an opportunity to reach their full potential, and 2) the child is more likely to experience better outcomes, better quality of life, and less healthcare and other resource utilization.

We urge the committee to support this vital legislation and thank you in advance for supporting budget proposals related to children with special/specific health needs and disabilities in SF2995.



I look forward to working with you during the conference committee process as a resource to you in assembling your final bill. Please contact me at 651-308-5873 or mollie.obrien@proofalliance.org if I can be of assistance to the committee.

Sincerely,

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

Mollie O'Brien
Executive Director
Proof Alliance

Cc: Sen. Jim Abeler, Ranking Minority, Senate Human Services Committee
Sen. Liz Boldon, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Sen. Robert Kupec, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Sen. Kelly Morrison, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Rep. Robert Bierman, Vice Chair, House Health Finance and Policy Committee
Rep. Heather Keeler, Vice Chair, House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee
Rep. Dave Pinto, Chair, House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee
Rep. Joe Schomacker, Republican Lead, House Health Finance and Policy Committee
Commissioner Brooke Cunningham, Minnesota Department of Health