

4/22/25

To Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I'm writing to strongly oppose the proposal in HF2434 to reinstate parental fees for TEFRA and waiver programs for families with adjusted gross incomes at or above 675% of the federal poverty level.

Raising a child with disabilities comes with extraordinary and ongoing costs—costs that most families, regardless of income bracket, are not prepared for. Families often face out-of-pocket expenses for therapies, medical care, adaptive equipment, specialized childcare, and more. These aren't luxuries—they are essential to our children's health, development, and inclusion in the community. These are the supports that let our children *live*, not just survive.

Like many families in this situation, we are constantly juggling how to meet these needs while also trying to create some kind of financial stability: buying a home, saving for the future, preparing for the possibility that our child may need care long after we're gone. We are not wealthy. We are trying to build a life under intense pressure—and reinstating parental fees would push that goal further out of reach.

These programs, especially through TEFRA and waivers, provide a lifeline. They offer respite, safety, and access to tools and services that promote independence and prevent isolation. Reintroducing fees not only adds a direct financial burden, but it sends a chilling message: that support for families like mine is conditional, revocable, and subject to shifting budget priorities.

Even more concerning is the precedent this sets. While this proposal targets families at a specific income threshold today, history has shown how easy it is for future policies to chip away at these programs further—eventually impacting lower-income families who are even more vulnerable. We should be protecting and strengthening access to care, not reintroducing barriers that we've worked hard to remove.

Please do not reverse the progress we've made. Say no to reinstating parental fees, and continue to stand with families who are doing the hard, lifelong work of raising children with disabilities and preparing them for a safe, supported future.

Sincerely,
Tiffany Palms
Lakeville, Minnesota