



**Institute to
Transform
Child
Protection**

Mitchell Hamline School of Law 875
Summit Avenue, Room 254 Saint
Paul, MN 55105-3076

phone 651-695-7672
fax 651.290.6407

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Dear Members of the Human Services Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Institute to Transform Child Protection, I am writing to express our support of H.F. 3211.

We believe H.F. 3211 makes vital amendments and proposals relating to the treatment of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for current and former foster youth. Under the current law, Minnesota essentially requires any foster youth who receive SSI benefits to use those funds to pay for their own care. However, these benefits belong to the child, not the child welfare agency. H.F. 3211 focuses on setting up Minnesota's foster youth for success by establishing an SSI trust to preserve the funds for the child for their exclusive benefit. We believe this is not only good practice, but the right thing to do.

Additionally, we support that this bill further assists foster youth by requiring the responsible agency to assess and apply for SSI benefits when the child may be eligible. Lastly, we support transparent and frequent communication to foster youth about the status of their SSI benefits including information about how they may access their benefits. This bill proposes imperative changes to the current law governing SSI benefits for foster youth which will help to ensure the protection and allocation of SSI funds for children currently or formerly in foster care.

We optimistically look forward to the success of this bill and hope to rely on your support.

Sincerely,

Madison Brunk
Minnesota Institute to Transform Child Protection
Mitchell Hamline School of Law Child Protection Clinic