

HF2073

Subd. 38.

Student Parent Support Initiative

Chair, and members of the committee, thank you for taking the time to read my testimony today. My name is Amanda Schermerhorn and I live in Detroit Lakes. I am a wife, mother of four and a full-time college student pursuing multiple majors. After graduation in May I plan to continue my education and attend law school. I am a Government Relations Fellow with LeadMN, a member of multiple committees on the MSU Moorhead campus, as well as a member of the Minnesota Student Parent Alliance (MN-SPA). I am submitting my written testimony in favor of HF 2073 Subd. 38, also known as the Minnesota Student Parent Support Initiative.

As a first-generation, non-traditional, student parent I can attest to how stressful it can be juggling class schedules, work schedules, home life, school activities, not to mention the numerous other medical appointments, deadlines and social activities. It can be a delicate balancing act, and a constant struggle to ensure there is enough time in a day to complete each task. These are issues that effect a great deal of student parents.

Parental educational success equates to a better chance at educational success for their children. This is why I decided to enroll at MState in Detroit Lakes in 2019, nearly 15 years after my last year in high school. I was a college freshman in my 30s. Then, and today still, I often find myself up until midnight to make deadlines, and waking up to start the day again at 5am. By supporting student parents during college, Minnesota is investing in greater economic stability for their families, which, in turn, leads to greater economic stability for the state as a whole.

I have heard time and time again how barriers, such as adequate affordable childcare, and the inability to work their children's medical appointment into their class schedule, are preventing them from getting the degree they need to achieve their version of the American Dream. This is why I had to wait 15 years to finally pursue my dreams.

There are faculty and staff at various post-secondary institutions who recognize this issue. As a member of numerous committees, I have expressed this to other leaders on campus. Although they want nothing more than to help those student most impacted, funding is constant barrier. We have found that often times grants that are available to institutions specifically exclude the use of funds for these wrap around services.

The Minnesota Student Parent Support Initiative is designed to work with institutions to provide the supports they are already seeking to provide, but cannot due to lack of funding and budgeting constraints. Studies have shown that students who feel their campuses want to help them succeed both in life and academically feel better connected to their schools and are more likely achieve college attainment. I hope you all take this into consideration and I thank you again for your time.

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