



April 27, 2023

Dear Chair Hoffman, Chair Noor, and Members of the Human Services Conference Committee,

The Arc Northland is a non-profit organization based in Northeastern Minnesota. Our mission is to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities which is why we are writing to express our support for the Governor's proposal in the House omnibus to end subminimum wage, and outdated practice that pays individuals with disabilities less than minimum wage. Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, passed in 1938, allows people with disabilities to be paid less than the state or federal minimum wage. It is an archaic and prejudicial practice that contributes to the cycle of poverty and results in segregation of people with disabilities.

Having economic stability can not only help our economy but allows individuals financial independence. This means less dependence on government funding. All individuals with disabilities, no matter their support or accommodation needs deserve the opportunity to work for fair wages and contribute to our community through gainful employment. There is momentum nationwide and in Congress to phase out subminimum wage and for almost 10 years we have been working through the Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act, spending time and resources to ensure individuals have choices when it comes to employment.

Minnesotans with disabilities deserve better and to be paid fair wages! It is time for our state to put our values of inclusion and opportunity into practice through our policy. Historically, Minnesota has been a leader in employment for persons with disabilities but is now falling short. The Governor's proposal to phase out subminimum wages included in the House omnibus bill is a critical step in ending this discriminatory practice and supporting the civil rights of individuals with disabilities.

Respectfully,

Amanda Crosby

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To promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities and their families while supporting inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetime.