



Human Services Conference Committee  
May 2, 2024

Chair Hoffman, Chair Fischer, and Human Services Conference Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN), we are writing to comment on the Human Services omnibus bills. In particular, we appreciate the House position phasing out subminimum wage.

NASW - MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing over 2000 social workers. Our members do both direct practice (clinical and non-clinical) and macro practice. We work as mental health professionals, in child welfare systems, nursing homes, home care settings, schools, and residential care.

Social work is based on a mission to enhance human well-being. Our core values include the dignity and worth of individuals, including the right to self-determination, and the importance of human relationships. Eliminating the practice of paying people with disabilities less than minimum wage supports these principles.

We demonstrate that we value people when we pay them a fair wage that is comparable to others. Ensuring that disabled people have the same labor rights as other Minnesotans will not only increase their sense of self-worth, it will improve their lives as they have more options to participate in the marketplace. Furthermore, life is more fulfilling when we can choose our place of employment. We can create and maintain relationships at work while also earning the income we need.

Support services for people with disabilities have evolved since the practice of subminimum started decades ago, and we are able to train and support people with disabilities to successfully work in many settings. Furthermore, the resources allocated last session support settings to make this transition.

Social workers begin their work by meeting the client where they are at. We believe our systems can support Minnesotans while applying wage laws equally.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen E. Goodenough'.

Karen E. Goodenough, PhD, LGSW  
Executive Director  
NASW-MN

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jenny Arneson'.

Jenny Arneson, MSW, LGSW  
Legislative Consultant  
NASW-MN