



March 24, 2021

Chair Jim Abeler
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3215

Jamie Gulley
President

Rep. Heather Edelson
549 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Jigme Ugen
Executive Vice President

Dear Chair Abeler & Rep. Edelson:

Phillip Cryan
Executive Vice President

SEIU Healthcare Minnesota represents 50,000 healthcare workers in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and self-directed homecare. On their behalf, I write to express our support for SF297/HF1825 which would create a Legislative Task Force on Human Services Background Study Eligibility. We support the bill because we have seen too many workers denied the opportunity to work for violations that do not indicate a danger to others.

Brenda Hilbrich
Executive Vice President

Rasha Ahmad Sharif
Executive Vice President

Let me illustrate with a recent example. In 2019, Emily J. was a member of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota. She had been hired to work as an Environmental Services Aide at Cuyuna Regional Medical Center. As a single mom, she was excited because the job let her provide better for her family. After about 5 months on the job, she suddenly received word that she had failed the background study and was immediately removed from the schedule.

In 2012, Emily was 20 years old learning to balance her check book. She wrote a \$100 check to buy her mother a winter coat as a Christmas present. Unfortunately, she had miscalculated the balance and the check was returned for insufficient funds. The store took the check to the local prosecutor. At the same time, Emily spilt up with her boyfriend and moved counties. She never got any of the notices for her offense and she was ultimately convicted of check fraud. A warrant was even issued for her arrest. Later in 2017, Emily realized the trouble she had gotten into and she paid off her fines and judgements. But two years later her conviction came up on the background check.

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We think a Legislative Task Force should look at whether this barrier to employment really protects patients or simply places one more burden on people struggling to better provide for their families and serve their communities.

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Sincerely yours,

Rick Varco
Political Director

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