

TO: MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

HF-1811/SF-1799

March 15, 2023

IN SUPPORT OF THE VOLUNTEERISM BILL

My name is Rojo Andriamihaja, and I am a board member of the Minnesota Alliance for Volunteer Advancement, and the Communications & Marketing Manager at Tubman. As a MAVA member, and former volunteer/intern engagement professional, I am writing to express my support for the Volunteerism Bill, HF-1811/SF-1799, allocating needs-based subgrants for under-resourced nonprofits.

Before transitioning into my role as Communications Manager, I was part of Tubman Intern & Volunteer Services team, and during my time as a volunteer coordinator, I saw the impact our volunteers and interns had on both staff and clients every day. Volunteers are present throughout the organization, from answering our crisis and resource line, to working with children and families, to volunteer attorneys giving their time to represent clients in court for free. Without the dedication and commitment of volunteers, we would not be able to provide the quality services our organization has been known for to the extent that we do. Many of our volunteers stay connected with Tubman after they leave, and many have also become staff after years of service because they are so connected to the people we serve and our mission. As a MAVA board member, I have also seen the impact good and research-based volunteer management and programming has done for organizations, by providing trainings and support for volunteer programs across the state.

Passing the Volunteerism Bill would provide organizations, like Tubman and other MAVA members, with the opportunity to grow their volunteer program capacities in ways that would address some of the biggest issues in Minnesota and around the county: housing and homelessness, education, health care, childcare, and much more. In particular, this could provide a pathway to more paid internship opportunities for college students at nonprofit organizations where paid internships are a rarity due to lack of funding; the bill would be able to properly recognize the work volunteers have done; and for some organizations, start volunteer programs where they previously would not have been able to because of funding.

All this to say, Minnesota has a strong culture of neighbors helping neighbors – people volunteering their time and talents whether it's at their place of worship, their children's schools, or in their community. Passing the Volunteerism Bill will ensure that we are committed to showing up for communities that need it most, and caring for one another as we have always done.

Thank you for time,

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