



February 14, 2023

The Honorable Jay Xiong  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
557 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Xiong and Members of the House Workforce Development Finance and Policy Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony in support of HF 684 (Agbaje).

The Minnesota Business Partnership is comprised of the senior leaders from Minnesota's largest employers. Since the Business Partnership was formed in 1977, one of our primary objectives has been to ensure Minnesotans are well-prepared for careers in the global economy.

Our members are greatly concerned about how education disparities and labor force shortages are impacting Minnesota's workforce and the potential for future economic growth. Education economist Dr. Eric Hanushek estimates Minnesota will experience an average 2.5% GDP loss from the compounding effects of education disparities and decreased skill levels of workers, which translates to over \$250 billion in economic loss to the state over the next few decades.

Programs like Summit Academy OIC work to reduce education disparities and improve skills, and in doing so positively impact the lives of Minnesotans and our state's economy. Summit Academy OIC is a leader in not only training students for in-demand jobs but also in partnering with employers to do so. The results are evident: Summit graduates receive the training needed to attain employment and build their careers, and employers benefit from a well-prepared, skilled workforce.

The bill under consideration would increase Summit's ability to offer programs to additional students and communities. By leveraging existing relationships and infrastructure, Summit will be able to partner with even more employers to train and connect students throughout Minnesota to in-demand jobs and careers. Strengthening the state's support for Summit Academy will help provide tuition-free career pathways for additional Minnesotans and help our economy continue to grow.

For these reasons, the Minnesota Business Partnership strongly supports HF 684. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Amy Walsten'.

Senior Policy Director  
Education and Workforce Development  
Minnesota Business Partnership