



May 1st, 2023

To: Chair Noor and Chair Hoffman
Representative Fischer, Representative Baker, Senator Abeler, and Senator Fateh

Re: Senate File 2934-3 / Unofficial Engrossment Senate File 2934-2

Dear Members of the Human Services Conference Committee,

The Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCCD) is a broad-based coalition of advocacy and provider organizations, as well as individual members, working to change public policy to improve the lives of people with disabilities through building awareness, providing education, and engaging in the community.

Thank you for prioritizing Minnesotans who have disabilities and for your steadfast commitment to enacting near, mid-term, and long-term solutions to the pressing workforce crisis. We write to express our support of many provisions included in the Senate and House versions of SF 2934. Passing these critical targeted investments now will help avoid further collapse of essential disability supports and services. These investments will also promote safety, equity, access and individual choice for Minnesotans who have disabilities so that they may continue to authentically participate their communities.

We are especially grateful for investments in both the Senate and House bills that:

- Changes to allow Personal Care Assistants (PCA) to drive their clients
- Investments and improvements to the Disability Waiver Rate System (DWRS) and PCA / Community First Services and Supports (CFSS) rates
 - Thank you for the investment in these vital services. We encourage conferees to consider the Senate position on DWRS rate increases and an added investment to the House position for PCA rates to ensure adequate funding to cover worker wages and benefits.
- Home Care Workers Union contract ratification and funding
- Creation of the Direct Care Services Corps pilot project

We are also grateful for the inclusion of the following provisions in the Senate omnibus bill and urge the House conferees to accept these provisions in the conference committee report:

- Reform to Medical Assistance for Employed People with Disabilities (MA-EPD)
- Elimination of Parental Fees for Medical Assistance
- Medical Assistance Income Limit Increase
 - We strongly support an increase to the income limit standard for MA so that we can work to address the poverty issue within the disability community.
- Expansion of Shared Services

- We are hopeful the conferees will include the updated and expanded language from HF 716 / SF 654 in the conference committee report
- Lifting the 40-hour Cap for parents of minors and spouses
- Supported Decision Making Grants

In the House omnibus, we appreciate the inclusion of the provisions that phase out subminimum wage. This would move our state in the right direction for equality for Minnesotans with disabilities. Minnesota is the highest user of subminimum wage based on our population. There is bipartisan support in Washington, D.C. and our country is poised to move on from this employment option. We need to work on transitioning our state's employment structure to one that is equitable and sustainable and we have a unique opportunity this session to start that process. It is time to eliminate this outdated practice and provide support and resources to providers as they transition. We urge the Senate conferees to accept the subminimum wage phase out provisions in the conference committee report.

MNCCD is grateful for your partnership and commitment to improving the lives of people who have disabilities. Thank you so much for making the most of this once in a generation opportunity that we have as a state to address the direct care workforce crisis. Your action will help ensure that people with disabilities can continue to choose where and with whom they want to live while building their best life in their community.

Sincerely,

Julia Page
Public Policy Co-Chair

Trevor Turner
Public Policy Co-Chair