



BIG STONE COUNTY MINNESOTA

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

February 8, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing in support of HF0895 and SF0810, proposed bills to increase per diem payments for residential facilities for adults with disabilities.

Monarch Heights, an ICF/DD facility located in Ortonville, has the lowest per diem rate in the state at \$148.10. The state average is nearly \$300.00. This is not a rural/urban cost disparity. Equally rural counties just to the north and south of us, Ottertail, Lac qui Parle, and Murray, have per diem rates from \$236.00 to \$418.00. This is, quite simply, a profoundly unfair glitch in the reimbursement formula, one that has gone unaddressed for far too long.

A comment we've heard from legislators in the past is that county commissioners reach out only when they want free money. Please understand that Big Stone County also pays a portion of the per diem, and the amount we support is the equivalent of over a 1% levy increase for the entire county. This is an indication of how strongly we feel about this issue.

Monarch Heights is more than a building; it is a group of employees doing important work to support people who matter. The residents who reside there are woven deeply into the fabric of our community, some having lived there for twenty or thirty years. Monarch Heights cannot thrive, perhaps not even survive, unless this deeply egregious funding mechanism is fixed.

No one can defend the current rates and they can only be remedied by your action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Olson".

Brent Olson

Big Stone County Board of Commissioners

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