



April 6, 2021

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the House Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee:

The Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) and Minnesota Disability Law Center appreciate the opportunity to provide written public testimony regarding HF 2230, specifically the DE 1. The Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) and the Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) are statewide projects of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. MDLC serves as the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organization for Minnesota, and, along with every other state and territory, is the largest network of legally based advocacy services for people with disabilities in the United States. MDLC provides free legal services to children and adults with disabilities. LSAP is a statewide division of Legal Aid, providing policy advocacy on issues affecting low-wealth Minnesotans, children, seniors, and Minnesotans with disabilities in legislative and administrative forums.

We write with sincere gratitude for many of the proposals included in HF 2230, DE1. This bill goes a long way to ensure that Minnesota's youngest children have access to needed early care, and that such care is available to low-income children and children who have disabilities.

Specifically, we are grateful for the inclusion of:

- **Inclusive Child Care Grants** (Lines 28.4-30.19). We are thrilled at the inclusion of this proposal. Including children who have disabilities in child care benefits all children and this proposal will help determine how to best ensure that child care providers have the support they need to serve children who have disabilities well.
- **Child Care Assistance Provider Rates** (Lines 6.6-6.11). This is a significant commitment to raising CCAP provider rates, which is essential to ensuring the availability of providers and care for families using CCAP.
- **CCAP Basic Sliding Fee Waitlist Reprioritization** (Lines 1.16-2.10). We support this reprioritization proposal to ensure as many families access CCAP as possible.
- **Flexibility to Commissioner for Outstanding Debt** (Lines 4.18-4.21). We appreciate affording flexibility to continue eligibility for some families with outstanding debt.
- **CCAP Absent Day Policy Changes** (Lines 11.10-11.13). We support this change to the Absent Day policy that helps protect families from challenging overpayments.

Thank you so much for the commitments to Minnesota's children in this bill. We sincerely appreciate your partnership and are eager to support these important provisions as you continue with budget negotiations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maren Hulden".

Maren Hulden
Staff Attorney