

Fue Lee
State Representative
District 59A



Minnesota House of Representatives

May 17, 2018

The Honorable Mark Dayton
Governor of Minnesota
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Governor Mark Dayton,

The purpose of this letter is to communicate our concern about the language of educational provisions contained in the proposed omnibus supplemental budget bill. There is adequate time to address these issues, but we want to draw your attention to the contingency-based language in Article 40 of HF 4099 regarding State Agencies.

There are important education funding provisions contained in the omnibus supplemental budget bill that we urge you to support as you enter negotiations for an end of session resolution with Republican legislative leaders. Those provisions include funding for Jake's Bill (HF 3361) and funding for Mind Foundry Learning Foundation (HF 3879). These measures are important priorities that could be harmed by changes to the Department of Education's operating budget contained in the omnibus supplemental budget bill (HF 4099).

We want you and your staff to be aware of the risk facing these programs because of the contingency-based language in the bill. We ask for your support in pushing for a non-contingency basis for the Department of Education receiving these funds to help Minnesota students.

As you have seen this session, the Republican majority in the Minnesota Legislature has not prioritized meaningful action against the bad actors and pharmaceutical companies causing the opioid addiction epidemic facing our communities. At the very least, Jake's Law would allow for substance and opioid prevention education in our schools. The bill originated when Sheri Schamus visited Rep. Kunesh-Podein and shared the story of losing her son to an overdose, how she and other family members created a foundation- For Jake's Sake- and had the mission to get the message to students before it was too late. Funding to help MDE get this information to students in other schools should not be based on a contingency when our state has a \$329 million surplus.



Similarly, Rep. Fue Lee's provision to provide \$200,000 for the Mind Foundry Learning Foundation would help schools confront two of the core challenges facing the future of our state's changing economy: the need for more STEM education, and the need to serve communities of color with educational equity. It would establish a STEM Education Center after-school and summer program to inspire and educate underserved youth in St. Paul about the value of STEM fields in 21st century work and learning. This one-time appropriation is a seed that could turn into a mighty tree, but it won't happen if it is based on a contingency that prevents funding from reaching these young minds.

These are just two examples. We ask you to use the tools at your disposal to help make many of the contingency-based educational initiatives in the omnibus supplemental budget guaranteed to be funded by MDE in 2019.

Sincerely,



Mary Kunesh-Podein
State Representative – District 41B



Fue Lee
State Representative – District 59A