

Please support HF 361

My name is Kjensmo Walker and I live in St. Paul. I graduated with a degree in Urban Studies from the University of Minnesota in 2011 and have been working in my field ever since. I volunteer in my community and lead an otherwise full and rewarding life. Along with my career passions of transportation and policy, I am a leader in the disability community. I have multiple disabilities and require support to build my career. As an adult I have had in-home and community supports. Currently I do not require these supports in my daily life. I am making progress in all areas of my life, including my career. I work 15 hours per week at a small nonprofit downtown St. Paul. I love my job and am excelling at work. I am ready to move to working 30 hours a week; eventually building to full-time employment, leaving all my disability supports behind, having a full time career, and saving for retirement just like everyone else. The organization where I work and my boss are ready for me to make this jump to 30 hours per week. The issue that I face is that making this leap – doubling the hours that I work – just does not pay.

Currently, including financial supports and earned income, I take home \$1,379.25 each month (annual take home income = \$16,551 and yes, I'm financially stable and live in market-rate housing). If I double my work hours, my monthly take home pay would be \$1,643.32. That is an increase of \$264.07 per month, or \$4.13 per hour.

The financial support program I am on currently has a \$2,000 asset limit. If I choose to save my money and have over \$2,000 in assets my financial supports would further decrease. By doubling my work hours and having savings, my monthly take home pay would be \$1,413.82. This is an increase of only \$34.57 per month, or \$0.54 per hour.

	Currently – 15 hours per week at \$12/hr	Working 30 hours per week at \$12/hr	30 hours per week with assets (over \$2,000)
Take home pay	\$1,379.25	\$1,643.32	\$1,413.82
Increase per month		\$264.07	\$34.57
Hourly wage increase		\$4.13 per hour	\$0.54 per hour

This is a work disincentive that needs to be corrected so that I can reach my full potential. Your support of HF 361 would allow me to retain more of my earned income and make working an incentive.

Thank you.

Kjensmo Walker