Minnesota House Education Innovation Policy Committee

Thursday, February 16, 2017

State Office Building 10

8:15 - 10:00 am

Regarding HF 0905, chief authored by Rep. Kresha.

Good morning Madame Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Bailey Boelter. I work with students from across all 8 congressional districts through the Minnesota Youth Council. I have spoken with many students regarding school climate and student behavior. While I haven’t lived their experiences, I can tell you that each and everyone of them want to feel safe, welcomed, and cared for at school.

I am concerned about removing the term “willful” from House File 905. I truly believe it is imperative for students to learn how to address harm and make amends through the guidance of school administrators when mistakes are made, rather than expulsions - which has been shown is ineffective and often leads to prison for many students. Students of color and students with disabilities would be most impacted by removing the term “willful” - this would drastically reverse our state’s efforts to reduce the opportunity gap.

As Marian Wright Edelman once said, If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much. Please stand up for our students, believe our students, and I challenge you to continue to invest in our children’s well-being and dignity regarding discipline as if they were your own. Thank you for your time.