

Minnesota House of Representatives
Health Finance & Policy Committee
Chair – Rep. Liebling

Re: HF 2128

Madam Chair and members, many thanks for the opportunity to testify today regarding the governor's budget for DHS. My name is Idil Abdull, and I am a Somali Autism Mom & Advocate.

First, I would like to thank the chair and other members who were here when we passed a bill (Early Intensive Developmental & Behavior Intervention) that covered autism therapy for Medicaid autistic children and their families. Because of your hard work and efforts, many kids with autism are now able to get the medically necessary treatments they need. Unfortunately, at that time, we were so eager to pass this unprecedented legislation in Minnesota that we did not include the background study portion.

As you know, autism is a developmental disability that affects the person's ability to communicate, sensory processing needs and behavior regulation. Often individuals with autism can recall word for word a movie they saw a year ago but may not be able to remember what happened to them that morning. Therefore, it is extremely important to have background checks for everyone who has access to these vulnerable children.

I see that DHS added a provision this year in the governor's budget which is in Article 2, Section 8, Subd 15, lines 37.24 to 37.29. I support this section and hope that all providers enrolled in an EIDBI agency are required to have their background study done before they have access to the children.

I hope Minnesota is proactive in this rather than reactive which is what happened in the Jensen case. We must protect children with autism proactively.

I thank you for your time and hope this section with the word required instead of initiated makes it to the final omnibus bill.

Idil – Somali Autism Mom