

TESTIMONY OF Mary Hauff

House District 45B Constituent

Chair Noor and committee members:

My name is Mary Hauff. I am submitting written testimony in support of House File 2847. Thank you for accepting my testimony into the committee hearing record.

Specifically, I support the bill provisions that establish the Statewide Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center, the Employment First Capacity Building grants, and phasing out subminimum wage. The bill provides a timeline and resources for service providers as well as Minnesotans with a disability to transition to and/or pursue employment at a competitive wage. House File 2847 bill does not eliminate center-based jobs or service providers. The proposed legislation takes into consideration what has worked and not worked in other states that have already phased out subminimum wage. If House File is passed and the resources are established, Minnesota will avoid the challenges that are raised as concerns and were faced in other states.

The proposed legislation aligns with Minnesota's Employment First policy and the Olmstead Plan. All Minnesotans must have opportunities to make life choices about where they live, learn, work, and enjoy their lives in the most integrated settings alongside people without disabilities. Competitive integrated employment and earning a competitive wage are possible for Minnesotans with a disability who want to work. I

have a 22-year-old daughter with an intellectual disability. Through her person-centered plan, she is making informed choices about her post-secondary education, where she lives, and her career. Jean enjoys working with co-workers with and without disabilities. She currently has an internship and is paid a competitive wage. It is possible.

As a parent, I understand and share the concerns raised by families about the safety of their loved ones with a disability. However, segregating people with disabilities in center-based jobs earning a subminimum wage does not assure that they are safer or have a higher level of protection than if they were earning minimum wage or higher in a competitive integrated job. If you want to address safety issues, I encourage you to look toward and support the recommendations from Minnesota's Comprehensive Plan for Prevention of Abuse and Neglect of People with Disabilities and the Olmstead Plan goals of Preventing abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and children.

Thirteen states have already passed legislation to phase out subminimum wages and the Federal government is considering similar legislation. It is a matter of time. I ask that you support the provisions in House File 2847 that phase out subminimum wages proactively.

Thank you.

