

Dear members of the committee,

My name is JoLynn McAlpine and I teach 7, 8, and 10th grade in the Elk River School District. Having been pregnant in the midst of a global pandemic and a type 1 diabetic, my family has taken COVID-19 guidelines and precautions very seriously at home, the workplace and out in the community.

Last November, my son's third-grade teacher tested positive for COVID-19. Unfortunately, this wasn't caught until the teacher had already had two days of contagious contact with students. As a result, the entire class was quarantined. After the first day of quarantining, my son began to feel mild cold symptoms. Shortly after, I myself became severely ill. My son and I both ended up testing positive for COVID-19. Contact tracing revealed that my son likely contracted it from his teacher and he brought it home to me. A week later the district decided to go back to distance learning for both elementary and secondary students due to the amount of positive cases that kept staff members out of work.

I understand that there are people out there who might be doubtful about the amount of spread in schools, but my family is an example of how this can have devastating consequences to school employees, students and families. I am receiving extra-monitoring now for my pregnancy due to having COVID-19 so early on and it's unknown what long-term effects that might have.

As a teacher in the district myself, it is clear that the virus poses significant risks to our staff and students. With schools returning to in-person learning, HF37/SF105 is a necessary backstop to ensure that teachers and school staff who unfortunately fall victim to the virus are protected and kept financially whole. Thank you.