



February 21, 2020

Sen. Greg Clausen  
2233 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
95 University Ave West  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Ginny Klevorn  
581 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Sen. Clausen and Rep. Klevorn:

The Best Life Alliance is writing today to thank you for authoring SF2080/HF2182 which would develop a pilot project utilizing financial incentives to attract postsecondary students to work as personal care assistants and direct support professionals (DSPs).

As you know, the Best Life Alliance is a statewide coalition of more than 130 organizations, people with disabilities, families and supporters advocating for Home and Community-Based Services. Accessing these critical services empowers people with disabilities to live, work and thrive in their communities. The only way we can provide these services is with a stable workforce but unfortunately DSPs earn significantly less than comparable positions in other fields. In fact, the average hourly wage for Direct Support Professionals is \$13.15 which is 17% less than jobs requiring similar skills and experience.

DSPs are skilled members of our community who empower Minnesotans with disabilities to live their best lives. However, according to recent data from the MN Department of Human Services, this industry has 18,500 current openings within our workforce with a 19.3% vacancy rate, one of the largest in the state.

We believe your bill could be an alternative approach in attracting young Minnesotans to enter this workforce and help alleviate our serious workforce shortage. If there is anything the BLA can do to help with this pilot, please reach out to ARRM's Director of State and Federal Policy, Sara Grafstrom at [sgrafstrom@arrm.org](mailto:sgrafstrom@arrm.org).

Sincerely,

Judy Marder  
Chair of the Best Life Alliance