

COALITION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

February 18, 2021

Education Finance and Policy Committee Minnesota Senate

1100 Minnesota Senate Building

95 University Ave. W.

Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Chamberlain and Members of the Education Finance and Policy Committee:

On behalf of the Coalition for Children with Disabilities to Senate File 1525 we would like to voice our concerns on the legislation to create an Education Savings Accounts for students.

While we understand the intent of this bill, the current language prohibits the participation of many students with disabilities. Private schools can and do exclude children with disabilities, and at a minimum are not required to provide the services needed for some children with disabilities to participate in school. This bill aims to promote school choice. Yet, many children with disabilities have no other choice aside from their local public school. Under federal law, children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education ("FAPE"). By requiring student participants in the Education Savings Account to disclaim their entitlement to FAPE from their resident districts, students with disabilities are effectively barred from the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns to Senate File 1525.

Coalition for Children with Disabilities

The Arc Minnesota • Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota

Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid/Minnesota Disability Law Center • Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance

PACER Center • Prader-Willi Syndrome Association of Minnesota

Proof Alliance