

February 17, 2022

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Karli Harguth, and I am a Self-Advocate from Winona MN. I was diagnosed with a rare Metabolic Disorder, with it comes low muscle tone and stamina. Meaning I get tired very easily. I also have epilepsy, and therefore do not have a driver's license and must rely on city transit or staff to go places. I was living with my parents since graduating High school due to these disabilities. I can be independent but need support as well.

Due to my disabilities, I cannot work a fulltime job and have limitations with the amount of weight I can lift, etc. I was working in a sheltered workshop but knew I was capable of so much more.

I don't want to live in a group home or an assisted living center. I wanted a place of my own. But still have the supports and services without having to rely on my parents. I got help from the Arc Minnesota Housing Access Services Program to help get me into a home of my own.

I am currently living on my own and have been living that way for the past 12 years. I am capable to live alone however I do have supports and services that check in two to 3 times a week. If I did not have the support of Cardinal of Minnesota Staff coming in to check in and help with errands, I would be lost and honestly still be living under my parents' roof. With no independence. Living on my own I have the independence but still have staff check in on me. With out them I would be lost.

I have the freedom to take the public transit here in town and go out with friends. However, this would not be possible with out the support of Services like the Housing Access Program from Arc Minnesota or Staff from Cardinal of Minnesota.

In order to be treated fairly and equally people with disabilities need the help and support in order to have us live our lives with freedom, power, and living the way we want to. Not having others run our lives for us.

I want to thank you for listening to my story. You have heard my story now just take a minute and think about the other self-advocates out there that could be living in similar situations as mine or have it worse and still be relying on someone or a program that doesn't give them the independence to live the way they would like.

Thank you,

Karli Harguth