



AMHERST H.
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FOUNDATION

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DATE February 21, 2022

TO Senate Human Services Reform Committee &
House Human Services Policy and Finance Committee

FROM Pahoua K. Yang, MSSW, PhD, LICSW, LP
Vice President, Community Mental Health & Wellness
Wilder Foundation

Written Testimony: SF3690/ HF3738

Chair's Abeler & Schultz and Committee Members:

Wilder has served children and families with mental health care for nearly 100 years, constantly evolving our services to meet their new and changing needs. Back in 2016, we worked with the Intermediate School District 287 (ISD 287) to create **a brand-new model** of integrated, high-intensity, interdisciplinary mental health services.

During this period, Wilder's CTSS providers have been able to serve countless families and students in a holistic and effective way. We have seen kids come in absolute survival mode, destroying classrooms and stealing staff keys, and family members struggling in their own ways, often with mental health issues as well. These are families and kids that are barely surviving, often without tangible hope. However, through passion, dedication, and a model that is the product of yearlong in depth consultation, and three years of piloting, evaluating, and refinement, our talented mental health professionals and educators have been able to re-instill hope to families and offer a path for lasting and holistic change.

Currently, this life changing work is often being conducted despite a system that is cumbersome, inflexible, and unwieldy. This has never been sustainable, it is much less so in the face of the additionally burdens of a pandemic, economic difficulties, and workforce shortages. Administrative simplification and updates to the CTSS statutes to focus on treatment over compliance are absolutely necessary so that Wilder and other CTSS providers are able to offer the services that Minnesotan communities need.

Right now, it is your choice whether or not these kids – and kids like them across Minnesota – have access to the care they need.

You can choose to support legislation that makes the right level of care accessible in a sustainable way. Your vote for SF 3690/HF3738 says that our kids' and families immediate stability and long-term outcomes are worth investment.

I am urging you to support SF3690/HF 3738

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pahoua K. Yang'.

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