

March 23, 2022

Dear Chair Abeler and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the Senate Human Services Reform Omnibus Policy Bill, Senate File 4165.

ARRM and our members have been in front of this committee multiple times this session, sharing personal stories of the real impact of the workforce crisis within residential services that support people with disabilities. We are grateful for the time and attention this committee has given us and the thoughtful discussion from members.

Senate File 4165 captures policy language that residential service providers have identified as important moving forward and we want to thank the Chair for including the following provisions in his bill:

- First, thank you for including ARRM's proposal to remove the separate license requirement for providing support using technology during the overnight hours in a Community Residential Setting, otherwise known as Assistive Overnight Supportive Technology (AOST). Technology is an important tool in our toolbox when it comes to finding solutions to the staffing crisis. Removing this unneeded, duplicative barrier to utilizing this service is an important step forward in expanding the use of this safe alternative to having a staff person physically on site.
- We are also grateful for the inclusion of two policy provisions important to supporting people living independently, in their own home.
 - Thank you for including ARRM's language that creates a new hour-long unit of service for Individualized Home Supports with Training. This alternative to the 15-minute billing unit will maintain the flexibility that was intended with the service while still providing administrative relief for providers.
 - Thank you for the inclusion of three additional, time-limited extensions to the transitional lease that will provide a safety net for individuals living on their own and working towards the goal of maintaining their own lease.
- Finally, your inclusion of language that will create a certification process for Out-of-Home Respite in an un-licensed setting for individuals under 18 and allowing for a higher-level background study for those providing the service is a critical change for families across the state. Supporting families and natural supports is another workforce solution. This legislation will open access and bring back options that were previously available for families when choosing where to receive respite support for their child.

We also want to acknowledge other solutions proposed in Senate File 4165 aimed at opening options for providers as they work through the day-to-day activities of supporting people with disabilities and ensuring that they are healthy and safe.



As we have said time and time again, we are eager to continue working with the Legislature to move forward with an array of creative ideas that will not only meet the needs of the individuals we support today but strengthen our services going forward.

We want to thank the Chair and this committee again for all the attention they have given to the services our members provide and most importantly, the people that access those services. We are ready to continue working together on these important policy provisions.

Sincerely,

Sue Schettle, CEO

Sara Grafstrom, Director of State and Federal Advocacy