



April 5, 2022

Chair Abeler and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services Reform Finance and Policy,

My name is Julie Johnson, and I am the President of MSS - an organization that provides employment and day support services to people with disabilities. I am also the President of MOHR, a statewide association of over 100 organizations providing employment and day support services to Minnesotans with disabilities.

As a large collection of organizations working together to advance the goal of supporting adults with disabilities living in every part of our state to have access to high-quality employment and other day enrichment supports, MOHR appreciates the opportunity to provide brief written testimony in strong support of provisions included in the S.F. 4410 A-1 Delete Everything Amendment.

MOHR would like to thank Chair Abeler, members of this committee, other legislators and DHS staff who have worked hard to continue to move our state in the direction of increased independence and informed choice for Minnesotans with disabilities. This is important and complex work, work which has been made all the more difficult with the challenges presented by the current crisis level shortage of disability services staff. We are very appreciative of the provisions included in this amendment that aim to support continued movement towards this shared goal.

The amendment's proposal to modify the Disability Waiver Rate System by fully implementing the Competitive Workforce Factor effective 1/1/2023 and updating the timing of the data used for future rate adjustments is a crucial step towards having a disability services reimbursement system based on more accurate market data. Additionally, the amendment's proposal to update the wage data informing the Employment Exploration reimbursement rate will help to increase access to this service focused on helping people with disabilities understand and gain exposure to competitive, integrated employment options.

If we as a state value Minnesotans with disabilities living full and meaningful lives, our state set reimbursement rates have to be set at a level to pay for the staff supports necessary to make that possible. The above provisions are crucial steps in this direction.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of the above provisions in this amendment, and please do not hesitate to reach out with further questions. We look forward to continued work together in our shared efforts to move our state forward in our support of Minnesotans with disabilities.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Johnson | MOHR President

P: 651-793-4150

jjohnson@mssmn.org