

TESTIMONY OF Amy Jo Piedade

Mankato, Minnesota

Chair Tomassoni and Committee members:

My name is Amy Jo Peidade. Thank you for the chance to testify today in support of Senate File 3972.

I want to go to college and earn a credential in the performing arts and writing. I like acting, music, dancing, writing and poetry. I am an older student and have an intellectual disability, but I still have career dreams.

In 2001, I enrolled in a two-year college to earn a certificate and become a preschool teacher's aide. I took some classes, but it did not work out. The college did not provide the supports that I needed. One professor even told me in front of all my classmates that I should never take a math class again.

I need the flexibility of universal design for learning, notetaking services, peer mentors, reading support, organization skills support and alternative ways to show that I understand the class information. Inclusive Higher Education would provide me with the supports that I need in college. However, there is not a Minnesota college that enrolls students with an intellectual disability and offers a performing arts or writing certificate or degree.

Today I have two part-time jobs with Open Arts of Minnesota as an assistant and with ACT as a teacher for a disability advocacy class.

A college that is a good fit for me is located in or near Mankato, is accessible through public transportation, offers a performing arts or writing credential, enrolls students with an intellectual disability and is affordable. I want to be part of the campus community and join campus clubs and activities.

We need more Minnesota college options for students like me to earn a certificate or degree, have a career of choice and live more independently. I ask that you support Senate File 3972. Thank you.