

## TESTIMONY OF Dupree Edwards

Chair Tomassoni and members:

My name is Dupree Edwards. 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. I like acting and music. I am an older student and have an intellectual disability, but I still have career dreams. I want to have an apartment of my own.

In 2019, I enrolled in a two-year college and took some classes, but it did not work out. I was required to take basic classes that I was not interested in. The supports that were offered, made me feel like someone was doing the work for me and I was not part of the class. I ended up dropping my classes because it was not a good fit for me. I want to go to college and learn. I need the opportunity to access a college education. 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 certificate or degree.

Today, I have a part-time job as an Upstream Arts teaching artist. My coworkers all have a postsecondary education. In order for me to find a full-time job in the performing arts that I want, I will need a college education.

A college that is a good fit for me is located in the Twin Cities, that I can use public transportation, offers a performing arts credential, enrolls students with an intellectual disability and is affordable. Paid internships and employment will help me develop more skills. I want to learn and have a career in the performing arts.

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.