



March 29, 2022

Dear Chair Tomassoni and Senate Higher Education Finance and Policy Committee Members,

On behalf of Proof Alliance, please accept this letter of support for SF 3972, the Inclusive Higher Education Act, as an affirmation of our full support and encouragement for this work in Minnesota. Proof Alliance is the statewide organization dedicated to preventing fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) and supporting all impacted. That support and advocacy includes youth and young adults with FASD who want to continue their postsecondary education. The proposed legislation provides the much needed framework and funding for increasing access to postsecondary education for youth and young adults with intellectual disabilities including those with an FASD.

Support and services for Minnesota public 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities will be provided by the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Technical Assistance Center in this proposed legislation. We know that the investment in inclusive higher education translates into higher levels of employment, wages and independent living as well as less reliance on social services like Social Security and Vocational Rehabilitation for people with intellectual disabilities. If passed, this expansion will be a great benefit to Minnesotans with intellectual disabilities since less than 3% have access to Minnesota postsecondary education offerings today. People with FASD often are very motivated to attend college and can be successful with the right supports. This program will provide that type of needed support and allow individuals to reach their goals.

Proof Alliance urges the committee to support SF 3972 Inclusive Higher Education Act so that Minnesota can broaden the pathway for young adults with intellectual disabilities to pursue their goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Messelt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sara Messelt  
Executive Director