

Dear Chair Kiffmeyer and Members of the MN Senate State Government Finance and Policy and Elections Committee:

Good morning!

My son Joe (who is 25 and has Down syndrome) works five days a week at ERDAC- the East Range Day Achievement Center- and he loves his job! I am writing on his behalf to ask your support for SF3408 which would expand and change the focus of the Task Force to Eliminate 14c employment. Here is why you should support the bill:

1. While the Task Force does not have legislative authority, it will produce a document recommending elimination of 14c jobs- it is right there in the title. By design, it does not have a mechanism for a minority report. It's membership does not include representation from the 5700 people in the State of Minnesota who will be most impacted by their decision.
2. The current Task Force membership is made up of organizations who value only direct employment in the community while also advocating "person centered planning". There is a very wide range of abilities within the intellectual disability community. Their person centered planning in employment needs to accommodate their needs- including the option of supported employment.

My son was required under WIOA (Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act) to find employment in the community after he graduated from high school. At the end of a three and a half year search, he was working one hour per week at minimum wage.  
One hour per week.

At ERDAC Joe is working five days a week. His transportation is provided. He is very social with his friends at work. He is building his skills as an employee. He has found employment that is meaningful to him. And a group, who doesn't know him, wants to take that away because they don't think it is good enough.

Forgive me if you think this is an overreaction from a parent. I must advocate for Joe, and 5700 citizens like him, who would just like to keep the job they have chosen.

The right thing is to expand the Task Force membership, look at all options for employment for persons with disabilities, and create a solid plan that works for everyone.

Thank you.

Jeanne Prittinen