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April 14, 2023

Re: Support for SF 2934 and opposition to a28

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am the Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (OMHDD). We are a small, independent state agency that protects and provides advocacy for people with disabilities. Our statutory mission is to promote the highest attainable standards of treatment, competence, efficiency, and justice for persons receiving services for mental health, developmental disabilities, chemical dependency, or emotional disturbance.

Included in SF 2934 is language that would clarify our governing statute and allow the state of Minnesota to comply with its intent: to reimburse our agency for ongoing work that our staff already does that entitled Minnesota to recoup federal financial reimbursement under Medicaid. We provide Medicaid administrative services, and we perform administrative tasks necessary to obtain federal reimbursement. However, contrary to the language of our statute, which provides for “reimbursement to” my office (Minnesota Statute section 245.945), our work does not result in this funding coming back to our agency; it goes to the general fund.

SF 2934 has language that would clarify and require this money to be remitted to our agency, as the statutory language contemplates. However, because this change would have a minimal impact on the general fund (\$149,000 per year according to DHS), the a28 amendment proposes to delete our portion of SF 2934 (section 5). This money would not come to the state but for our agency’s work. We ask that the Finance Committee reject the a28 amendment, insofar as it attempts to prevent our agency from recouping federal funding obtained specifically because of the work of, and due to the efforts of, our agency.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barnett (Bud) Rosenfield

Ombudsman

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