



March 29, 2023

RE: Support for a MinnesotaCare Public Option (SF49)

Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee:

I'm writing to express strong support for a MinnesotaCare Public Option (SF49). Springboard is a 30-year-old nonprofit organization based in St. Paul and Fergus Falls that works with 20,000 artists, culture bearers and creative workers across Minnesota each year.

These artists, culture bearers and creative business owners are contributing to the economy, culture and health of their neighborhoods, business districts, and communities all across the state. These artists are teaching in schools and after school programs, addressing social isolation in elder care, helping rural communities attract and retain young people and creating the culture that defines Minnesota as a vibrant and desirable place to live and raise a family.

Like other small business owners and gig workers, artists are disproportionately self-employed and often have variable income making it difficult to access adequate health insurance. At Springboard, one of our services is providing small business coaching and other business resources to artists. We hear over and over again that the primary barrier for these entrepreneurs is access to affordable and useful health insurance. Many artists are forced into health plans with \$7,000 deductibles per year, on top of premiums and other out-of-pocket costs, or to go without health insurance all together.

Artists have valuable skills to help us build social connection, improve mental health, rethink and reimagine public spaces and institutions, and tackle our most pressing challenges like environmental sustainability, social connection and education. However, to fully benefit from the contributions that artists can make to Minnesota's economy, vibrancy and future, these creative workers and small business owners need to be able to make a living and a life in Minnesota.

Expanded access to MNCare would help many artists and creative workers make their lives more sustainable and access more reliable and affordable healthcare for themselves and their families. Passing a public option will help make sure that Minnesota is place where culture, innovation, small businesses and local economies can thrive and grow.

We urge you to pass a MinnesotaCare Public Option in SF49.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Zabel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Laura Zabel
Executive Director
Springboard for the Arts