



March 31, 2023

To: Health and Human Services Committee Members

Re: Minnesota SF2995 Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Families Act

Dear Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Proof Alliance, please accept this letter of support for provision modifications and appropriations for the Department of Health- Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Families Act (Article 4 Section 53; Subd 6. Act). I write to you as the Executive Director at Proof Alliance, the Minnesota-based nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing fetal alcohol spectrum disorder [FASD] and caring for all impacted.

13% of babies in Minnesota are born with prenatal alcohol exposure each year. Prenatal alcohol exposure is the leading cause of preventable birth defects in the U.S. Prenatal alcohol exposure causes FASD. **FASD is a disability with lifelong implications** that can impact brain function, development, learning, behavior, and social skills. One in 20 children in the U.S. has an FASD. That means it's likely to be in every classroom across this state.

**This bill would improve early identification of developmental delays, thus helping to identify prenatal alcohol exposure and provide effective interventions for children with an FASD.** For example, developmental and social-emotional screening and referrals to community-based resources and support are critical to supporting people with an FASD. People living with an FASD are more likely to need foster care, PCA services, waivers, medical care, mental health care, case management and special education. The physical, mental, and emotional cost of FASD to families is devastating, and the financial cost to our state is shocking. But, if a child is screened and diagnosed early, and connected to the right interventions, resources and supports 1) the child has an opportunity to reach their full potential, and 2) the child is more likely to experience better outcomes, better quality of life, and less healthcare and other resource utilization.

**We urge the committee to support this vital legislation** and thank you in advance for supporting budget proposals related to children with special/specific health needs and disabilities in SF2995.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mollie O'Brien".

Mollie O'Brien  
Executive Director  
Proof Alliance