



February 2, 2023

To: Education Policy Committee Members

Re: SF 655 Inclusive Higher Education Act

Dear Chair Fateh and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Proof Alliance, please accept this letter of support for the SF 655 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 an 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 an FASD often are very motivated to attend college and can be successful with the right supports. Inclusive higher education will provide that type of needed support and allow individuals to reach their goals.

Proof Alliance urges the committee to support SF 655 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 "Mollie O'Brien".

Mollie O'Brien  
Executive Director