

February 13, 2023

Re: SF 1201 and SF 1272



Dear Chair Hoffman and Senate Human Services Committee Members,

The Arc Minnesota strongly supports SF 1201 and SF 1272. Both of these bills take aim at the same fundamentally unacceptable practice of taxing disability. The bills would make transformational changes that would align our policies with Minnesota's values and directly benefit children and adults with disabilities and their families.

SF 1201 would eliminate the parental fee for Medical Assistance (MA) state plan services and Home and Community Based Service (HCBS) waivers. Families of children with disabilities take on a significant cost just to ensure their children can access the supports and services they need. Many families have to make the difficult choice between paying the parental fees or accessing supports their child needs—which is no choice at all.

SF 1272 would make long overdue changes to the Medical Assistance for Employed People with Disabilities (MA-EPD) program. For over 20 years now, the MA-EPD program has provided an opportunity for Minnesotans with disabilities to work while accessing critical services and supports through MA. While this program was created to boost employment for people with disabilities, the asset limit, premiums, and administrative burdens are a significant barrier to employment and keep people with disabilities living in poverty. Many accessing the program face financial distress as they are under a constant threat of losing their safety net supports.

Policies that force people with disabilities and their families to live in poverty in order to access services and supports are dehumanizing. They imply that people with disabilities and their families do not deserve financial stability, let alone prosperity. Administrative processes that monitor these programs take away money that could be spent to improve services. They create barriers to economic stability and put unnecessary burden on people accessing services. When people with disabilities are barely allowed to survive, they are not allowed to thrive and flourish as valued and respected members of society.

The Arc Minnesota encourages the committee to pass SF 1201 and SF 1272 to end the additional tax on Minnesotans with disabilities and their families. Please let people with disabilities and their families get beyond just surviving and move on to thriving. We will all benefit from their prosperity.

Thank you, Senator Maye Quade, for carrying bills that would be life-changing to so many Minnesotans.

Sincerely

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