

February 20, 2023

Re: Support for SF 2

To: Members of the Senate Human Services Committee



Dear Chair Hoffman and Committee Members,

Founded by parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in 1946, The Arc Minnesota is a statewide nonprofit advocacy organization that promotes and protects the human rights of individuals with IDD, supporting them and their families in a lifetime of full inclusion and participation in their communities. We are a chapter of The Arc of the United States, the largest national community-based organization advocating for people with IDD and their families.

There are a high number of open, unfilled positions in the direct care workforce. Many people with disabilities and service providers are struggling to find and retain workers. One factor contributing to this workforce shortage is the lack of benefits for these positions. Many people do this work without access to health insurance, worker's compensation, paid family leave, and child care. The devaluation of direct support workers reflects the negative perceptions, stereotypes, and discrimination against people with disabilities themselves. People in direct support positions deserve to be valued for their important work. They should get benefits that help them stay healthy and well, and support work-life balance including paid family and medical leave.

We support SF 2 which would provide paid family and medical leave to all workers in Minnesota. Providers must have rate increases to account for this change so that they can provide the benefit equitably to the direct care workers they employ. As the discussion around paid lead continues, we are also supportive of ensuring this benefit will not negatively impact people with disabilities enrolled in MA-EPD in accessing this benefit. We thank Chair Hoffman for his attention in addressing this issue.

The Arc Minnesota encourages the committee to pass SF 2 in combination with rate increases for providers. We are thankful to Sen. Mann for carrying this bill.

Sincerely,

Julia Page
Public Policy Director