

## Human Services Committee

To: Chairman Hoffman and Members of the Committee

I am writing to you today in support of SF 2944, the PCA College Service Corp Project. My name is Diane Drost and I have a daughter who sustained a cervical spinal cord injury after her first year of college. I also represent Women Staying Strong a support and advocacy group for those caring for family members with spinal cord injuries.

Our family members are in big trouble. Even when the workforce was strong my daughter struggled with recruiting staff because many PCAs preferred to work with clients with less physical/health needs.

Over time she discovered college students were willing and able to work for her. Unfortunately with the rising costs of college many students left the home care field to find higher paying jobs. We need them back!

Last year we received a Margaret Cargill Foundation Grant to establish the first ever PCA College Service Corps Pilot. They supported our plan to recruit college students to work as home care PCAs with the most vulnerable and at risk population. MCIL is administering this grant.

There is a strong interest in our pilot by college staff and students especially those going in the fields of OT, PT, Kinesiology and Social Work. However we are committed to recruiting any student regardless of area of study to join us. We will build a diverse and competent service corps.

Because of the renewed national interest in providing service opportunities to help meet community needs we are also pursuing federal funding for our work. This will bring additional federal money into our state.

We have laid the foundation for the college student service corps and now it is up to you to decide if we can continue once our grant expires. This is just one of the many efforts designed to prevent our home care system from collapse. Please support SF 2944. Thank you.

Diane Drost, Women Staying Strong