



Senator John Hoffman, Chair  
Human Services  
March 31, 2023

Chair Hoffman and Human Services Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN), we are writing with comments on Senate File 2934.

NASW - MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing over 2000 social workers. Our members do both direct practice (clinical and non-clinical) and macro practice. We work as mental health professionals, in child welfare systems, nursing homes, home care settings, and residential care.

Social work is based on a mission to enhance the well-being of humans. Our core values include the dignity and worth of individuals and the importance of human relationships. We believe individuals have the right to self-determination. We advocate for our clients, and want to ensure that social workers and other professionals are supported in their work.

Many settings in which social workers serve are in need of rate adjustments and reform, and we appreciate the attention in this bill. Paying providers fair rates for the services they offer not only allows them to offer better care to Minnesotans in a way that aligns with social work values, it allows them to attract the necessary workforce to serve clients well.

We recognize that even with significant resources, it can be difficult to allocate funds in a way that meets the full demand. Yet, we urge you to consider expanding SF2934 to include eliminating the practice of paying people with disabilities less than minimum wage. This supports our values of individual dignity, self-determination, and empowering others. It is an issue of social justice.

We demonstrate that we value people when we pay them a fair wage that is comparable to others. Ensuring that disabled people have the same labor rights as other Minnesotans will not only increase their sense of self-worth, it will improve their lives as they have more options to participate in the marketplace. Furthermore, life is more fulfilling when we can choose our place of employment. Support services for people with disabilities have evolved since the practice of subminimum started decades ago, and we are able to train and support people with disabilities to successfully work in many settings.

We appreciate your service and work on this committee. Thank you for your consideration.  
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen E. Goodenough'.

Karen E. Goodenough, PhD, LGSW  
Executive Director  
NASW-MN

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jenny Arneson'.

Jenny Arneson, MSW, LGSW  
Legislative Consultant  
NASW-MN