

**TESTIMONY FOR THE SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**SF2934**

**MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE**

**MARCH 31, 2023**

Good afternoon Chair Hoffman, and members of the committee. My name is Kathy Tyler and I live in Eden Prairie. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of my very special disabled sister Debbie, who lives in Bloomington. Debbie has experienced first-hand the effects of losing a special minimum wage job in an attempt to find work in the regular job market.

Debbie was with Lifeworks at the time they dropped their 14c certificate in 2017. Instead of working in a supervised environment that she loved, she was taken on interview after interview in an attempt to find minimum wage work. She was rejected and embarrassed again and again. Debbie didn't even want the jobs she was applying for, as she is unable to stand for long periods of time or work an 8-hour shift. She wanted to keep the work she had.

Lifeworks never could find Debbie a minimum wage job, and after endless interviews told us there was nothing more they could do. They recommended that we look for

another program. We happily took Debbie out of Lifeworks and enrolled her in Opportunity Partners, which provided special minimum wage work, a reason to leave her apartment every day, and interaction with the staff and co-workers around her. It is a perfect fit!

Debbie has a strong work ethic. She has no interest in going to a day program to do puzzles and watch movies. She wants to work for pay, and every day tells us about the work she has accomplished. She is on Social Security which pays for her living expenses, and the money she earns at Opportunity is used for extras.

I believe the purpose of this bill is to help the disabled by mandating employers to pay them minimum wage. **But if** in actuality it causes a devastating loss of employment for those least able to secure jobs --- is that helping? If this bill passes, the damage to the disabled will be vast. It is a certainty that Debbie's job and thousands of others will go away. What a nightmare.

14c jobs are an answer to prayer. **Please strike the verbiage in SF2934 relating to Special Certificate Prohibition** to keep them. Thank you.