



February 23, 2023

The Honorable Bobby Joe Champion
Chair
Jobs and Economic Development Committee
Minnesota Senate
3401 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Rich Draheim
Ranking Minority Member
Jobs and Economic Development Committee
Minnesota Senate
2225 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: SF 1261 - Adoption of Recommendation of the Advisory Task Force on State Employment and Retention of Employees with Disabilities

Dear Chair Champion, Ranking Minority Member Draheim, and Members of the Committee:

Legal Aid writes in support of SF 1261 to adopt the recommendation of the Advisory Task Force on State Employment and Retention of Employees with Disabilities.

This bill will reduce barriers for Minnesotans with disabilities in terms of obtaining and retaining employment and demonstrate, by example, that this is an important issue for Minnesota. In addition, it will create a workforce bringing a breadth of lived experience to make better and more inclusive policies for Minnesotans with disabilities.

Advocates and attorneys in Legal Aid's Disability Law Center were especially encouraged to see the fund set up by this bill. A barrier many of our clients with disabilities face when entering employment is the cost of the reasonable accommodations they need. The fund addresses those barriers and assists persons with disabilities entering and retaining state employment. It will also serve as a pilot project for other Minnesota employers to emulate, helping even more persons with disabilities to obtain and retain jobs.

Thank you for allowing Legal Aid to share its views on this legislation. We urge passage of SF 1261.

Sincerely,

Ellen Smart
Staff Attorney