



THE HENNEPIN COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF PARAMEDICS AND EMTs  
1325 WINTER ST, SUITE 102. MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55413

03/14/2024

RE: SF 4835

Dear Chair Wiklund and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

I am the President of the Hennepin County Association of Paramedics and EMTs (HCAPE). HCAPE is the labor union that represents 911 paramedics, EMTs and dispatchers at Hennepin EMS. Our members have proudly served 14 municipalities in Hennepin County, including Minneapolis, for decades.

I wanted to reach out regarding our opposition to SF 4835 as currently drafted. This bill as written would dismantle the EMS Regulatory Board and replace it with an agency overseen by one individual director with no accountability or oversight, but rather advisory boards with no real teeth to address a failing or corrupt director. The proposed office in charge of EMS would become a political football in this proposal, forming policies based on the whims of an ever-changing and all powerful director.

In 2020 our members worked through a historic pandemic, coupled with unprecedented civil unrest. Our paramedics continued to respond to calls for help, under incredibly dangerous situations, as much of Lake Street burned. Our dispatchers continued to answer the thousands of calls from scared residents as chaos unfolded around them. We are not strangers to catastrophe. HCAPE members have been there for many of the state's darkest days, like the Accent Signage shooting and 35W bridge collapse. If we are to remake EMS institutions, the providers themselves and their representation must have a prominent voice. That voice is currently silent in this bill. Input from frontline workers and labor organizations, as well as all stakeholders, is paramount to the successful implementation of system wide changes.

As emergency medical professionals, we rely on the guidance of our dedicated EMS physicians. We are fortunate to have driven and patient care focused medical directors who strive for the highest quality care. Their drive and focus built one of the strongest and most innovative EMS systems in the country. This bill completely removes these subject matter experts from the statutory language, instead replacing them with political appointees and "advisors".



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If Minnesota is to continue our long history as a destination for world class medical care, we must lead with expert level clinicians.

I want to specifically address the primary service area language in this bill. Current PSA laws must remain protected. We cannot allow a single political autocrat, with little to no oversight, the ability to change the ambulance service in a municipality or region. The current PSA laws protect these communities and force ambulance providers to render service.

I am confident that efforts are underway to address and rectify these concerns. I look forward to reaching a collaborative compromise on the proposed legislation that not only enhances the emergency medical services field, but also incorporates valuable input and oversight from labor, operations, and medical direction leadership. I am looking forward to working with Senator Seeberger and other stakeholders towards a solution that elevates Emergency Medical Services to the level it deserves.

Respectfully,

Shane Hallow

President

Hennepin County Association of Paramedics and EMTs