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Letter of Support SF 4525
Senate Higher Education Committee

Chair Fateh and Committee Members,

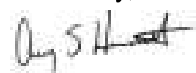
I am writing this letter in support of SF4525, the Minnesota RISE Act, which updates Minnesota statute 135A.16. The statute was passed into law in 1991 and has not been updated since. The legislation increases the consistency across colleges and universities by requiring clear and accessible policies that outline the procedures and process for students with a disability to self-disclose their disability, initiate the interactive process and arrange for accommodations that provide equitable access. It will ease the transition students with a disability experience from K-12 where the school districts initiate the process to postsecondary education when the responsibility shifts to the student to initiate the process for accommodations.

The legislation expands what documentation institutions of higher education accept for determining the student's accommodations. This prevents students with a disability having to go through the time-consuming and expensive process of obtaining a new evaluation to re-prove a disability. By removing barriers students with a disability face, institutions of higher education encourage students with a disability to pursue a post secondary education and reduce the burden many students with a disability experience when navigating new and difficult procedures just to prove they have a disability in order to access the accommodations that they need.

Disabilities are lifelong. Students with a disability are capable of success when afforded the proper support. Students with a disability may face new challenges as they transition to higher education and new experiences. This is not a change in their disability, but a potential change in their accommodation needs. This is why it is important for a transparent interactive process that allows for reviewing and adjusting a student's accommodations.

The Institute on Community Integration (ICI) believes that passing SF4525 will address common barriers faced by college students with a disability leading to increased enrollment, self-disclosure rates, and persistence and attainment rates of college students with a disability. As such, ICI encourages the committee to support SF4525.

Sincerely,



Amy Hewitt, Director and Professor
Institute on Community Integration