



March 12, 2024

Chairman Omar Fateh
3219 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Vice Chairman Aric Putnam
3215 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Ranking Minority Member
Zach Duckworth
2229 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairman Fateh, Vice Chairman Putnam, and Ranking Minority Member Duckworth,

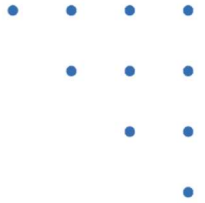
On behalf of the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), we urge you to pass Senate File (SF) 4525 out of the Senate Higher Education Committee so that Minnesota college students with disabilities can better access needed disability services, which includes reasonable academic accommodations. NCLD is the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that individuals with learning disabilities have the support, tools, and resources they need to succeed in school, work, and life.

SF 4525 is an important bill that would streamline the process to qualify for disability services and require colleges to accept a variety of forms of documentation of a disability, including an Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 Plan, notice from a doctor, or evaluation by a psychologist. Many students with disabilities receive accommodations throughout Pre-K–12 education, but when they transition to college they must navigate new and often burdensome requirements for documentation of their disability. College students with disabilities are often saddled with a maze of new and frequently costly requirements to "prove" that they have a disability to access disability services. Many students must pay out-of-pocket (\$500-\$2,500+) for new psychoeducational evaluations to demonstrate they indeed have a disability, despite their well-documented history of having accommodations or supports for their disability in their IEP or 504 plan.

In addition to these financial barriers, prospective colleges often have different information available about their disability services and what documentation will be accepted in order to obtain services and accommodations. At all public institutions that offer a bachelor's degree in Minnesota,¹ formally registered undergraduate students with disabilities comprise anywhere between 3% or fewer (Minnesota State University-Moorhead, Saint Cloud State University, and Southwest Minnesota State University) and 17% (University of Minnesota-Morris)² of the student

¹ Bemidji State University, Fon du Lac Community College, Metro State University, Minnesota State University-Moorhead, Minnesota State University-Mankato, Saint Cloud State University, Southwest Minnesota State University, University of Minnesota-Crookston, University of Minnesota-Duluth, University of Minnesota-Morris, University of Minnesota-Rochester, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, and Winona State University.

² Source: IPEDS Data in College Navigator



population. These disparities suggest that colleges differ in how accessible their disability services are, which is also evident by comparing policies and documentation requirements available on their websites.

SF 4525 expands access for students with disabilities to ensure they have what they need to succeed. We strongly urge you to vote in favor of this piece of legislation to support college students with disabilities. Please contact Lindsay Kubatzky, NCLD's Director of Policy and Advocacy at LKubatzky@ncld.org should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jacqueline A. Rodriguez'.

Dr. Jacqueline Rodriguez
Chief Executive Officer
National Center for Learning Disabilities

