

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education,

On behalf of the 30,000 undergraduate students our organization represents, the Undergraduate Student Government urges you to support [SF 4525](#), otherwise known as the Minnesota Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act. This proposed legislation is a monumental step forward in ensuring that our higher education system is more inclusive, accessible, and supportive for students with disabilities.

The RISE Act promises to dismantle many of the barriers that have historically impeded students with disabilities from achieving their full academic potential. For example, the RISE Act would expand the acceptable documentation an undergraduate student may use to establish that they have a disability and to be considered for accommodations. The RISE Act also requires higher education institutions to adopt transparent and explicit policies regarding disability services. This includes making the policies accessible, and sharing this information with prospective, admitted, and enrolled students, families, and faculty. This approach is not only compassionate but practical, reducing undue burdens on students and easing the process for students to receive support.

Similar legislation is being considered at the federal level, but it is crucial that Minnesota establishes its own statute in support of students with disabilities. The federal legislation is primarily budget-focused, which does not make sense for our policy-focused session. Minnesota's RISE Act is tailored to address the limitations of current state statutes, and will best support Minnesota students.

We are asking for your support in updating the existing policy to create an inclusive environment where all students, regardless of their background or disabilities, can access the resources and support they need. The clear communication standards that the RISE Act would allow students to have a full understanding of what accommodations they would receive should they attend a higher education institution.

In closing, we urge you to support the RISE Act. Its passage will signal a significant advancement in our commitment to equity and inclusion in higher education. By supporting this Act, we are not only upholding the rights of students with disabilities but are also investing in a more diverse, innovative, and successful future for our entire community.

Sincerely,

The University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Undergraduate Student Government Executive Board