

March 13, 2024

Re: Letter of Support, SF 4399

Chair Hoffman and members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

I am writing in support of Senate File 4399—specifically the provision prohibiting issuance of 14(c) certificates which authorize payment of subminimum wage to people with disabilities. As a former teacher and current Employment Specialist with Reach for Resources, it is of utmost importance that my former students and current clients have the opportunity to find work that pays competitive wages. I encourage the senate to consider the ramifications of allowing for subminimum wage work to continue in the state of Minnesota.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990. Under this act, state and local governments are required to provide people with disabilities the most integrated settings possible. This includes employment. Most people working for subminimum wage do so in segregated settings—directly contradicting the ruling of the ADA. Just last year, the United states Department of Justice found that these segregated employment settings may be in violation of the ADA.

Minnesota prides itself on being a leader in disability rights, yet it remains that people with disabilities can earn below the minimum wage with a 14(c) certificate in our state. Many Minnesotans earn just \$4.25 per hour, with some earning as low as \$0.07. Is this considered a fair wage? Prohibit the issuance of 14(c) certificates as outlined in SF 4399 to ensure that Minnesotans with disabilities are paid minimum wage or higher by 2028.

Sixteen states in the United States have already passed legislation protecting the rights of people with disabilities to earn minimum wage. It *is* possible and necessary to follow their lead and truly commit to integration, inclusion, belonging, and justice for all Minnesotans. I implore the senate to support wage equality for all Minnesotans with disabilities.

Respectfully,

Hannah Miller