

Senator John Hoffman, Chair
Senator Jim Abeler, Minority Leader
Members of the Human Services Committee
2111 Minnesota State Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hoffman, Lead Abeler, and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

This is Jenna



Jenna was born 1982 and is now 41 years old. She was born 6 weeks early and injured by the medical team at birth. She had a brain bleed that caused uncontrolled seizures, cerebral palsy, and dystonia. Jenna uses a power chair and has limited mobility, low vision and high anxiety and depression issues. She is challenged with DD but is functioning cognitively and can communicate.

Jenna waited 11 years for a DD waiver to meet her needs. When she was 23, there was no group home that worked for her, so we applied and got a 245D license. We planned to convert our family home for Jenna to live with 3

friends and we would move to a townhome. This fell through when the county pulled our license due to us being family.

We then purchased a home with two separate living units and installed an elevator at our expense to accommodate Jenna. We extensively remodeled the kitchen and bathroom and installed an overhead lift, plus put in a walkway from upper level down to her front door. We received no waiver funding for the modifications. This was done in 2005 so she has had her own apartment for 18 years. At this time, her elderly grandmother shares the 3-bedroom separate apartment with her.

Jenna needs 24/7 services and supports to have a life. Her life includes a job at Home Depot 8 hours a week, a lift van that she purchased with our help, church, Special Olympics, day program, a service dog, and many friends. She is living her best life in spite of so many limitations. Because the service system and staffing has failed, we are grateful she has been close enough to be safe near us.

Our plan for her future is to have three of her friends move into the double home and share supports and overnight staffing. The upper unit has three bedrooms and two baths. So, four to five adults with disability issues could live here in her double home. Currently two of the friends are in group homes settings and are extremely unhappy and very limited in their life.

Waiver 'Unimagineable' as proposed will destroy all our plans and the lives of Jenna and her friends. It would drastically cut her budget by even 50% because she lives in her own apartment instead of group home or institutional care. How does that make sense? We need an exception process in place to provide adequate budget funding for high needs individuals that choose to live in their own homes.

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