



March 20, 2024

Chair Hoffman and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

Accessible Space, Inc. (ASI) is a St. Paul-based nonprofit organization that provides affordable, accessible housing and supports to individuals with permanent physical disabilities, brain injuries and mobility impairments, along with older adults and veterans. We have over 160 HUD-subsidized housing communities including apartment and residential settings, here in Minnesota and across the nation. On behalf of all of the individuals we serve and our incredible staff that supports them, **we want to express our full support SF 4399 (Human Services Omnibus Policy Bill).**

We are especially excited to see the inclusion of various sections, specifically:

Article 1: Disability Services

- Section 1 and 2 - will help ensure that individuals with disabilities are allowed to live in communities across Minnesota wherever they choose without the fear of local governments implementing/enforcing discriminatory rental housing ordinances.
- Sections 3 to 7 - will clarify timelines related to initial planning meetings, modifying educational requirements of designated coordinators/managers, and permitting staff under the age of 18 (who are trained/competent) to administer medications.
- Section 11 - will modify MA-EPD income review and documentation requirements.
- Section 14 - will streamline forms used by lead agencies to determine rates for individuals on home and community-based waived services, including customized rates.

Article 4: Aging Services

- Section 4 - will modify/simplify long-term care options counseling.
- Sections 5 and 6 - will provide increased transparency in nursing home related-party transactions and remove outdated reports.

It is disappointing, however, that the section and language related the ending of subminimum wage for individuals with disabilities was removed in the previous committee hearing. Minnesota is a leader across the nation in so many areas as it relates to how it supports and treats individuals with disabilities...this is not one of them. I urge members to reconsider this language and to work with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and other stakeholders (including the Disability Equity Committee within the [Governor's Workforce Development Board](#)) to continue to implement the thoughtful planning and work that is already underway.

I look forward to continuing to work with Chair Hoffman and advocates on sections 8 to 20 and 22 to ensure the intent of these sections is effective and actually operational. The language appears to be moving in the right direction and I am confident that it will land appropriately.



Accessible Space, Inc.

And finally, I want to extend our sincere thanks to Chair Hoffman, Committee Administrator David Zak, and *all* the members and staff on the committee for engaging in thoughtful, productive and respectful discussions related to the many important bills heard this session. The bipartisan dynamic you all have is extremely rare and appreciated. The work that each of you do truly impacts the lives of Minnesotans and we appreciate how you approach this work on a daily basis. THANK YOU!!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Josh Berg', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Josh Berg
Director of Minnesota Services & Strategic Growth
Accessible Space, Inc.