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March 18, 2024
Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee

Dear Chair Champion and Members of the Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Family Tree Clinic to express our strong support for SF3502. This bill is vital for addressing the urgent needs of LGBTQIA2S+ individuals in Minnesota, particularly regarding healthcare access and economic opportunities.

Since 1971, Family Tree Clinic has been cultivating a healthy community through comprehensive sexual health care and education. As regional leaders in health equity, we center populations facing significant barriers to care. 79% of our patients identify as LGBTQ, 31% as BIPOC, and 70% live below 200% of the federal poverty level. Our commitment to inclusive care has earned us a perfect score on HRC's LGBTQ Healthcare Equality Index.

Our Clinic is experiencing unprecedented demand, with a record 6,456 visits in 2023. 67% of visits were for gender-affirming hormone care. Since the inception of our hormone program in 2015, we've had a remarkable 1,000% increase in patients for this essential care. The passage of the Trans Refuge Bill in Minnesota has further increased demand. In 2023, we had 225 visits from people traveling long distances or from out of state to come to Family Tree Clinic.

LGBTQIA2S+ Minnesotans face disproportionate social and economic obstacles, including barriers to healthcare access stemming from a lack of affordable and LGBTQ-competent providers, as well as inadequate wraparound services. While Family Tree Clinic remains committed to meeting these needs, our expenses continue to mount.

Minnesota has stood alongside us as a trans refuge state, but this commitment has not been met with a proportionate increase in state funding. Additionally, philanthropic support for trans communities remains alarmingly low, impeding organizations like ours from expanding our workforce to meet the substantial demand for gender-affirming care and wraparound services.

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SF3502 offers a crucial opportunity to enhance economic opportunities for LGBTQIA2S+ individuals by addressing barriers and providing essential support services. By aligning with broader workforce development goals, this bill ensures that LGBTQIA2S+ individuals can access the medical, economic, and social support necessary for leading full and healthy lives.

Your support for SF3502 is pivotal in advancing the well-being and economic prosperity of LGBTQIA2S+ individuals across Minnesota. We express our deepest gratitude for your consideration and urge you to stand in support of this crucial legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Annie Van Avery", with a long, flowing tail.

Annie Van Avery
Executive Director

