



April 2, 2024

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

As a member of the Metro Food Justice Network (MFJN), I am writing to express my strong support for the Culinary Workforce Development Bill (S.F. 5181), which seeks crucial funding for Healthy Roots Institute (HRI). This initiative is pivotal for the continuation and expansion of HRI's impactful work in our community, including the esteemed VoCul program.

In 2018, Chef Lachelle Cunningham launched HRI, focusing on food education, culinary training and certification, business training, and ongoing professional support for entrepreneurs and businesses. Her work here aligns with her mission to promote health, sustainability, and community empowerment through food.

Lachelle's multifaceted approach not only educates and inspires but also fosters an inclusive, sustainable food ecosystem. Her leadership across these initiatives invites everyone to partake in a culinary journey that champions cultural expression, community building, and social change. Lachelle's dedication to transforming the Twin Cities' food landscape and community well-being is unparalleled, making her a central figure in the region's culinary and cultural revitalization.

The significance of this initiative cannot be overstated. It promises not only to enrich individuals with vital skills for the culinary industry but also to sow seeds of economic resilience and social cohesion within our community.

I strongly urge your support for SF 5181. This piece of legislation has the capacity to make a lasting, positive impact on the lives of many and the culinary landscape of our state.

Thank you for considering this support. Together, we can contribute to a vibrant future for our community, marked by prosperity, inclusivity, and culinary excellence.

Sincerely,

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