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Dear Members of the Jobs and Economic Development Committee,

As a graduate of the VoCul Culinary Training program, I am writing to express my strong support for the Culinary Workforce Development Bill (S.F. 5181), which seeks crucial funding for the 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.

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 started my work experience at McDonalds almost 30 years ago. While my professional career path led me to community organizing, this program provided me with an entry point back into the food industry. I was able to obtain the required state level Food Managers ServeSafe Certification to begin the process of starting my own food-based business.
- A couple of things I learned that personally impacted me and my family are eating with the seasons and the introduction to nutrition. My son sees a nutritionist and since being in this program, I've been able to make small changes in his diet that have led to a decrease in his BMI.

I strongly urge your support for this initiative, confident in its 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,

Sina Black