



April 2, 2024

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

I'm writing to express my strong support for the VoCul Workforce Development Bill (SF 5181), which seeks crucial funding for Healthy Roots Institute (HRI). This initiative is pivotal for continuing and expanding HRI's impactful work in our community, including the esteemed VoCul program.

As the founder of HRI, Lachelle Cunningham is on a mission to impact the economy and local food system through food education, culinary training and certification, business training, and ongoing professional support for entrepreneurs and businesses. She values holistic healing through the love of food, recognizing its profound impact on every aspect of our lives – from physical nourishment to spiritual connection.

Lachelle believes in cultivating an economically viable and sustainable network of diverse food businesses, working towards a future where flourishing restaurants and food establishments genuinely support the people behind them. Through her work at HRI, and with the VoCul program in particular, Lachelle is dedicated to building a more inclusive and equitable food economy, rooted in community empowerment and cultural enrichment.

The significance of the work that HRI is doing to create equitable employment opportunities in the culinary field cannot be overstated. HRI's programming 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. In doing so we can contribute to a vibrant future for our community, marked by prosperity, inclusivity, and culinary excellence.

Sincerely,

**Jenny Breen**  
Owner/Instructor