



2026 SPECIAL OLYMPICS USA GAMES

April 16, 2024

Chairperson Champion and Members of the Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee:

On behalf of the Special Olympics athletes and the Local Organizing Committee for the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games, I am writing to express our sincere gratitude for your inclusion of \$4 million in the jobs bill to support the inclusion initiatives of the 2026 Games. We recognize the challenging budgetary environment and appreciate your commitment to the Special Olympics mission of improving the lives of people with Intellectual Disability (ID) both ON – and OFF – the field.

The critical funding you are including this year will enable us to advance planning associated with the many initiatives that we presented. Specifically, we will be able to focus on:

- Addressing the challenges people with ID have with access to health services and disparity in health outcomes. Our work will focus on favorably impacting health and wellness in the ID community.
- Addressing underemployment and unemployment in the ID population. With only 18.5% of people with ID employed to the level of their ABILITY, our efforts will focus on driving the inclusivity of sport into the workforce.

Your support for our \$4M funding request represents a crucial step in achieving our goals of leaving a legacy of inclusion in Minnesota using the platform of the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games. While we will celebrate sport on display June 20-26, 2026, the monies represent an investment in a future where everyone can contribute to Minnesota's economic growth regardless of their abilities – and it will drive significant economic impact for years to come.

Thank you again for your support.

Warm regards,

Christine Sovereign
President and CEO, 2026 Special Olympics USA Games



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