

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SF 2790

Dear Members of the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senator Pha's SF 2790 that provides continued funding for debate programs in our state. As a former Minnesota debater myself, I can confidently say that no other educational experience better prepared me for college and my career than participating in middle school and high school debate. The skills I learned from debate, including critical thinking, public speaking, and analysis of complex issues have been invaluable throughout my life.

As a parent of four children in District 112 (Eastern Carver County), I wanted to ensure my own children had the opportunity to experience the same transformative activity. This year, with the help of the Urban Debate League, we were able to bring the Middle School debate program to our district. Upon the announcement, the interest was so great, we needed to expand the number of students we would allow into the program. My oldest child, Roger (6th grade), eagerly joined the program and found it to be a highlight of his year. I watched with pride and joy as Roger and his peers grew their confidence and critical thinking skills throughout the program.

None of this would have been possible without the critical support provided by legislative funding. These funds have been essential in delivering the debate curriculum and ensuring our students can attend tournaments. Without this support, the students in District 112 would miss out on the life-changing benefits that debate offers.

I urge you to continue investing in middle school debate programs through the Urban Debate League so that more young people in Minnesota can gain the invaluable skills and confidence that debate provides. Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to supporting Minnesota's students.

Sincerely,

Brian Garshelis