

Catherine Carley

Parent, Metro Deaf School

Testimony in support of SF2502

Senate Education Finance Hearing

Tuesday, March 25, 2025, 8:30 am

Chair: Sen. Mary Kunesh

My 3.5 year old son, Channing is profoundly deaf. As one could imagine I was terrified and terribly worried about what his future would hold.

When Channing was about 6 months old I heard about at new birth to 3 program at Metro Deaf School (MDS) that was brand new for deaf children to be immersed in sign language starting at birth. Our family had already been attempting to learn and teach American Sign Language (ASL) to our son but I felt so far behind. I was so thankful when I heard about MDS' program and signed Channing to start as soon as I was able.

He started going to the actual school for 5 hours a week just a few days after his first birthday. I will forever be grateful to the birth to 3 program for giving our son full access to his first language. For being a resource that was there to help his development during such a vital time of his life.

All I want for my children is for them to be happy and fulfilled someday. I worried Channing would be robbed of that. I once thought that Channing would have trouble making friends or maintaining relationships, let alone a job. MDS squashed those fears of mine and taught our family so much about deaf culture and ASL.

Channing graduated from the program this past summer and is currently thriving in preschool. Our family is so thankful for the invaluable and imperative access to language that he received during such a vital time of his development. Something he would not have had without this program.

The birth to 3 program is so important for deaf children and their ability to thrive in our communities. I hope they are able to continue helping families like mine thrive.

Thank you,

Catherine Carley

Lakeville, MN