





Written Testimony for SF 2215
Senate Human Services Committee
March 12, 2025**

Chair Hoffman, Lead Abeler, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SF 2215, which establishes essential legislative oversight of the Waiver Reimagine initiative through a legislative task force.

I am Reverend Katrin Bachmeier, a mother and caregiver of waiver participants. I also administer Minnesota's largest support groups for people with disabilities, including the MnCHOICES assessment support group, where I hear directly from families across our state struggling with these systems.

Grace's Story: Why SF 2215's Oversight Is Critical

Last year, I testified before this committee about Grace, a medically complex child who was approved for nursing care through a CAC waiver in Hennepin County. When Grace moved back to her home in St. Louis County, those same life-sustaining services were denied despite no change in her medical condition.

Today, she's fighting for her life in the PICU on a ventilator due to our state's failure to ensure equal access to life-sustaining disability services across settings and county lines in violation of Federal Laws.

SF 2215 directly addresses these inconsistencies by requiring review of assessment tools and methodologies that determine life-critical supports..

Discrimination in Assessments That SF 2215 Would Address

The current MnCHOICES assessment system contains concerning patterns of discriminatory outcomes based on factors including location, age, and living situation. SF 2215 recognizes that "MnCHOICES 2.0 is not working" and that we cannot implement a new waiver system until we fix these fundamental assessment issues.

The task force established by this bill would have the authority to examine these discriminatory practices and ensure assessments are based on actual needs rather than arbitrary factors.

Broken Promises That SF 2215 Would Prevent

In March 2024, Natasha Mertz from DHS promised this committee there would be no budget drops under Waiver Reimagine and that a specialized DHS team would review problematic assessments. Despite numerous emails and inquiries from desperate families over the past year, those promises remain unfulfilled.

SF 2215 prevents such broken promises by requiring transparent oversight and accountability before major system changes are implemented.

Transparency Issues That SF 2215 Addresses

Hard evidence submitted to this committee demonstrates a troubling pattern: DHS initially presented multiple initiatives—including CDCS unbundling, CSP form changes, and other policy modifications—as connected parts of Waiver Reimagine. When questioned about these connections, DHS deleted references from their website and denied these relationships.

SF 2215 addresses this lack of transparency by requiring complete disclosure of plans to the legislature, the task force, and all waiver recipients before implementation.

Budget Disparities That SF 2215 Would Correct

According to DHS's own legislative report (page 38), a medically complex person with identical support needs would receive an a maximum of \$93,674 if living independently, but more than double—\$210,064—if living in a congregate setting. This disparity creates a powerful financial incentive pushing people into more restrictive environments.

SF 2215 directly tackles this issue by requiring that individual budgets be set based on the needs of the individual, not tied to location of services.

Wasted Investments That SF 2215 Would Protect

Families have invested enormous sums in home modifications, purchased duplexes, built mother-in-law apartments, and created accessible homes to support their loved ones. These investments would be rendered useless under a system that financially penalizes independent living.

SF 2215 protects these investments by ensuring budgets allow people to live in the setting of their choice with adequate support.

Breaking The Implementation-Without-Oversight Cycle

Our state has a troubling pattern of implementing massive system changes first, then attempting to create Band-Aid fixes that cannot address fundamentally broken and federally non-compliant programs. SF 2215 breaks this harmful cycle by requiring proper study and approval before implementation.

For Grace, for thousands of Minnesotans with disabilities, and for fiscal responsibility, I strongly urge your support for SF 2215. This bill ensures that changes to Minnesota's disability waiver system receive proper oversight,

address discrimination, comply with federal law, and truly meet the needs of the people they are designed to serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Reverend Katrin Bachmeier
Katrin.bachmeier00@gmail.com