

Lauren Thompson

3-11-25

Mr. Chair and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

I am writing in strong support for SF2215. This bill provides a critical framework for improving the delivery of services to Minnesotans with disabilities by ensuring that their needs are addressed authentically and efficiently, as well as cost effectively.

By establishing the Legislative Task Force on Waiver Reimagine and requiring thorough public input, the bill ensures that the voices of service recipients, families, and providers will be heard throughout the process. This will help create a waiver system that is responsive to the diverse needs of individuals and communities, particularly those in rural and underserved areas.

The bill also prioritizes ensuring that services are not location-dependent, allowing for budgets that better reflect the true needs of individuals, rather than being tied to arbitrary geographic or residential restrictions. This approach is essential for ensuring that individuals can live in the least restrictive, most integrated environments possible, as required by the Olmstead Plan and the ADA.

Furthermore, the requirement for the Department of Human Services to collaborate with the Legislative Task Force before submitting plans for federal approval ensures that all stakeholders will have adequate time for review and input, helping to prevent any unintended disruptions in services.

Waiver policies which acknowledge individual needs of recipients, as well as transparent, collaborative protocols for policy implementation are elements that have been lacking thus far in the Waiver Reimagine implementation process.

As a recipient of waiver services, as well as an advocate who previously served on the superfluous Waiver Reimagine Advisory Committee, I feel very strongly that disability services would be in serious jeopardy without these actions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lauren Thompson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Lauren Thompson