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Good afternoon Chair John Hoffman and Human Services Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. My name is Brenda Berlien, my son Jackson is now 11 years old. He has been a recipient of a DD waiver (CDCS) since he was 4 years old. He is autistic level 3 which means he has very high support needs.

Jackson has a history, starting at 2 years old, of elopement and has always been very attracted to lakes and pools. Throughout his life there were many many times that I had to jump after him into bodies of water because he had no fear and could not swim. I knew what the result would have been if and when there was no one there to save him. I tried everything I could think of to teach him water safety and how to swim, but failed. Ultimately, he needed one on one lessons with instructors with the expertise and patience to teach him.

It took a few years of private lessons that we as a family could not have afforded on our own. However, we were very blessed and lucky that, at that time, he qualified (with his case workers approval) to have 1:1 lessons covered by his waiver.

Today, I am proud to say that, because his waiver covered weekly lessons, Jackson is a very proficient swimmer! He no longer needs lessons and I no longer have to desperately worry about his imminent danger around water. He loves to swim, it is an important skill that he will have for the rest of his life!

I don't know the details as to why adaptive and 1:1 lessons are no longer covered under state services? In a state like Minnesota every child and adult needs and deserves water survival skills. This includes those people, like my son, whose disabilities put them at a higher risk for drowning.

Thank you!

Brenda Berlien