



April 1, 2025

Senate Human Services Committee

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for SF3040 - Swimming Lessons

Dear Chair Hoffman and Human Services Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of Jewish Community Action to express strong support for SF3040, which ensures that people receiving HCBS can use budgeted funds to cover the cost of swimming lessons for individuals with disabilities who are at a higher risk of drowning.

- Children with autism are at higher risk of drowning than typically developing children.
- Two children with autism have died within the past year, and many more have been at risk.
- Swimming lessons are one of many factors that can help end preventable drownings.
- This is a common sense provision which costs the state no additional funds. It simply allows families who receive Home and Community Based Services for the safety measures they prioritize.
- All children deserve the right to live safely in their homes and communities.

In our tradition, our Talmudic scholars say that Jewish law requires parents to teach their children to swim, understanding that swimming is a lifelong, and potentially life saving skill. We also believe in *kavod ha b'riyot*, or the dignity of all people. The legislature has the opportunity to acknowledge the dignity of children with disabilities, and support their families to provide them with life-saving skills.

We ask for your support of SF3040.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Beth Gendler", is positioned above the printed name.

Beth Gendler
Executive Director, Jewish Community Action.