



March 20, 2025

Re: Support for SF2342

Dear Chair Champion and Members of the Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee,

On behalf of our collective organizations, we are writing in support of SF2342 (Senator Mohamed). SF2342 would make a crucial investment in Minnesota's future through the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP), a core workforce program that provides one-on-one intensive support to at-risk young people through paid work experience and in-school career counseling. This investment in youth leads to **better outcomes for our youth and supports local employers by equipping young workers** with the basic skills needed to enter the workforce before they start their first day on the job.

Minnesota Youth Program supports young people who are facing significant barriers and are at-risk with developing hands-on, work readiness skills. Research shows us that this leads young people to increased likelihood of staying engaged in school and positive activities in the short term, future success in the workforce and self-sufficiency, and increased wages in their 20s in the longer term. This upstream investment supports young people in making a strong entrance to the working world and helps provide ready-to-work staff for local employers.

Implemented at the local level to meet each community's needs, the Legislature's investment in the Minnesota Youth Program makes a real impact. Youth earn wages while building valuable job skills and their professional networks, increasing their opportunities for success. Students who dropped out of high school are able to get back on track by completing their GED and connecting to employment. Paid internship placements result in being hired on as direct employees. Youth are given the chance to explore high wage, high demand careers in the trades, technology, and more before making decisions

about their post-graduation plans. **In 2024, over 4,500 youth were served through work experience programming and over 40,000 more were served through Outreach to Schools.**

This biennium, the Minnesota Youth Program received its first increase above \$4 million in funding since 2003. Over the years, the lack of needed funding for this program meant thousands of youth in our communities missed out on crucial work skills support. However, **the increased investment in 2024-2025 flowed out to your local workforce boards and community partners and we scaled to nearly double the annual combined enrollments of youth in one-on-one support and outreach-to-schools activities. SF2342, as it is to be amended, would make that increased investment and the impact it had on Minnesota's youth from this biennium ongoing.** Minnesota's youth can't wait – our state has only 6 jobseekers for every 10 job openings and employers are in need of job-ready workers. Minnesota needs this investment for our young people, our local employers, and our local economies.

We would like to thank Senator Mohamed for authoring SF2342 and Senator Draheim for his co-authorship. This bill would continue to support our youth and our communities' employers through this core workforce development program that is delivered at the local level with excellent results. The impact is statewide and time-tested. We recognize that the state's financial situation requires careful decision-making, and we thank you for your leadership in making those choices. Investing in our youth is one of the best investments we can make – and this program brings real results. **We ask you, Chair Champion and committee members, to please support the Minnesota Youth Program and SF2342.**

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Beth Burt, Strategic Advisor, and Savannah Swanson, Policy and Advocacy Director, **YWCA Duluth**

Jared Smith, Executive Director and CEO, **Tree Trust**

Julie Brekke, President and CEO, **Hired**

Danielle Grant, Executive Director, **Achieve Twin Cities**

Amber Sadowski, Executive Director, **Life House**

Karen Blackburn, Executive Director, **Cook County Higher Education**

Dodie Brown, President and CEO, **True North Goodwill – Northern Minnesota and Northwestern Wisconsin**

Zak Radzak, Secretary-Treasurer, **Teamsters Local 346, Duluth, MN**

Jack Carlson, Business Representative, **District Council 82, Painters and Allied Trades Local 106**

Lori Kloos, President, **St. Cloud Technical and Community College**

Dr. Annette Parker, President, **South Central College**

Breton Monroe, Executive Director, **The Brainerd Baxter Youth Center**

Carol Anderson, Executive Director, **Morrison County Community Development**

Stan Paczynski, Business Representative, **Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers, Local Union 1 MN/ND/SD**

Jordan Bremseth, Recruiter, **Finishing Trades Institute Upper Midwest**

Corey Cusick, **AFL-CIO Community Services Director, Head of the Lakes United Way & Duluth Central Labor Body**

Scott Luostari, Business Representative, **Carpenters Local Union #361**

Bruce Remme, Assistant Principal, and Tricia Neubarth, School Counselor, **South Ridge School**

Michael Renford, Building and Grounds Director, **Pequot Lakes Public Schools**

Liz Moscatelli, Executive Director, **Vadnais Heights Economic Development Corporation**

Armin Budimlic, Executive Director, **IMAA**

Jim Root, Affiliate Administrator, **Gundersen St. Elizabeth's Hospital and Clinics**

Lorne Lundeen, **Construction Laborers Local No. 405**

Tammy Bohlke, Director of Workforce Development, **Center for Workforce Professional Education at Minnesota State University – Mankato**

Kim Mueller, CTE Coordinator, **South Central Service Cooperative**

Karen Wolters, Adult Basic Education Coordinator, **Mankato Area Adult Basic Education**

Nancy Sprengeler, Director, **Educational Talent Search**

Trish Boeke, **BENCHS**

Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards

Anoka County Workforce Development Board

Career Solutions (Stearns-Benton Counties) Local Workforce Development Board

Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services

Dakota-Scott Workforce Development Board

Duluth Workforce Development Board

Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board

Minneapolis Workforce Development Board

Northeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board

Northwest Private Industry Council Workforce Development Board

Ramsey County Workforce Development Board

Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program Workforce Development Board

South Central Workforce Council

Southeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board

Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board

Washington County Workforce Development Board

Winona County Workforce Development Board