



April 1, 2025

The Honorable Bobby Joe Champion
Chair, Jobs and Economic Development Committee
Minnesota Senate
3401 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Rich Draheim
Ranking Minority Member, Jobs and Economic Development Committee
Minnesota Senate
2225 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Legal Aid Letter of Support for SF 3053

Dear Chair Champion, Ranking Minority Member Draheim, and Members of the Committee:

Legal Aid thanks you for the opportunity to provide written testimony and support for SF 3053.

Legal Aid represents clients in poverty, clients who are 60 and older, and clients with disabilities free of charge. We frequently represent clients who have unemployment insurance (UI) cases.

An applicant for UI must meet several qualifications. One qualification is that an applicant must be "available for suitable employment" (268.085, subdivision 15). However, despite the fact that the ways we look for work have drastically changed, our statutes have not. Most job searches and applications are done online now. If you search want ads in the newspaper, almost all of them request online or emailed applications. If you walk into a fast food establishment and ask for a paper application, you are given a QR code with a link to an application online.

Even if an applicant is able to do their entire job search online, if they are physically outside their "labor market area" while unemployed, they become ineligible for UI benefits. This rule does not allow for any flexibility and does not fit the times we live in. Furthermore, it unfairly penalizes clients who are forced move in with friends or family while unemployed because they can no longer afford their housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding SF 3053. We urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ellen Smart", with a stylized, cursive script.

Ellen Smart
Staff Attorney
Legal Services Advocacy Project

This document has been formatted for accessibility. Please call Ellen Smart at 612/746-3761 if you need this document in an alternative format.