



Senator Bobby Joe Champion
Minnesota Senate
95 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 7, 2025

Dear Chair Champion and Members of the Jobs and Economic Development Committee:

Thank you again for hearing our bill last week. **We are deeply grateful to learn that Bolder Options' bill was included in the Senate's omnibus bill** so we can continue to grow the number of young people with access to our life-changing programming.

One of Bolder Options' core values is "all it takes is all you got." In that spirit, our board and staff made a bold commitment at the end of last year to stay engaged - all the way through to college and/or career - with every young person who completes our one year program. Youth ages 10-14 are eligible for our first year program then we build upon the trust and connection built to invite young people into progressively more advanced programs and services.

Research shows that starting career exploration in middle school is a developmentally appropriate time to think about future possibilities and understand the diverse range of careers available. **Considering options early teaches youth about skills and aptitude needed for careers of interest and allows them to make more concrete career choices later in high school.** For especially vulnerable teens like those referred to our program, supportive mentorship and the act of pursuing goals builds confidence critical for believing they can achieve future goals.

On behalf of all of us at Bolder Options, **thank you for your support** - and for your service to our communities. (We hope to introduce some of you to our youth next year to share about public service as a career option!)

Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darrell Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D".

Darrell Thompson
President & CEO

Cc: Tom Melton