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FAMILY SERVICES

February 18, 2025

Dear Legislative Committee Members:

I write to support SF942 being heard in your committee. This bill supports community driven services to address situations where children are deemed to be educationally neglected and provides flexibility for counties seeking to utilize a community provider to address the underlying causes of educational neglect & truancy within a family.

Currently, counties and the county social service agency are limited in their response options when providing a child welfare response. At this time, counties are required in statute to provide a child protective response to reports of educational neglect. This response can often times result in a negative relationship with families immediately simply due to the idea that child protection is involved. Often, the reasons for educational neglect come from a poverty or lack of resources for families and not due to abuse and/or neglect. This bill changes the statute to allow a county to provide a response to an educational neglect report using a community-based organization or other community partner to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate responses to meet the needs of the family or respond using a child welfare approach from within the county social service agency.

Understanding the underlying challenges within a family that lead to educational neglect takes time and trust. Providing a means to serve the family through a community led organization or partner widens the pool of available supports to the family – and can often result in the formation of a lasting and wrap around support mechanism that the family can work with and rely on for other needs as well.

I support this bill and its focus on accessibility and supportive resources for children and families in Minnesota.

We urge this committee to pass this bill to best support Minnesota's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Becky Deterling", is written over a horizontal line.

Becky Deterling, LSW
Children & Family Services Supervisor