

Dear Committee Members

**The Autism Society supports the Governors Policy bill provision to guarantee minimum wage for people with disabilities.**

As you know, AuSM has been committed to this work since the beginning and has been integrally involved with the task force and legislative work creating historic investments towards preparing providers to make the transition.

We know that this change comes with many emotions and a universe of new things. But we also trust in the work that the task force has done to help the legislature prepare our state for a fruitful outcome for all people with disabilities. Minnesota has always been a pillar in greatness for the disability community, being years ahead in special ed provisions, in service options, and in human rights and equitable living. This is the next stage of that.

Just as there was uncertainty and controversy when Minnesota committed to closing institutions, Minnesota demonstrated the high level of community standards to ensure our community was successful. People with disabilities now thrive in our community and contribute to the greatness of this state.

If we assume people can not succeed they will not succeed. Our assumptions will become reality. But if we assume there is possibility and that they can, we give those assumptions the potential to become reality.

[please watch this video](#). It may change your perception about who these workers are. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HpLhxMFJR8>

**As a member of the task force we contemplated creating a step by step plan as part of our report, but we were also tasked with listening to community stakeholders including providers. When asked what they would need in a plan to**

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2380 Wycliff St. #102 • St. Paul, MN 55114

Telephone: 651.647.1083 • Fax: 651.642.1230 • Website: [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org) • E-mail: [info@ausm.org](mailto:info@ausm.org)



**successfully move from sub minimum wage to minimum wage and/or customized employment the answer was remarkably unanimous. FLEXIBILITY.**

**Providers reported that they needed support and flexibility to adjust to their own timeline and choose their own pathway to create this change. That is why the task force made the recommendations they did, including technical assistance that would embrace mentorship, education for families and case managers and data tracking. This was the plan. So that each provider could find their own journey and their own individual transformation. BECAUSE THIS IS WHAT THEY ASKED FOR. This is also the plan that the legislature chose to fund in 2023. The idea that there is no plan legitimizes the work that the legislature committed state funding to in 2023 because this work is in fact the plan that was laid out by the task force.**

We have prepared with the same commitment to excellence to leave behind the antiquated practice of sub-minimum wage. Through the greatness of our community and our legislatures. We are prepared for this step. Please support Guaranteeing Minimum Wage for People with Disabilities through a sunset date for section 14C.

Jillian Nelson

Policy Director

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