

## Addressing the shortage of special education teachers

**Date:** January 28, 2025

**To:** Senate Taxes  
Sen. Ann Rest, Chair  
Sen. Bill Weber, Chair

**From:** Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing

### Please add special education to fields qualifying for master's degree tax credit – SF0249

The Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing urges members of the Taxes committee to support SF0249, which adds special education to the fields qualifying for up to \$2,500 tax credit towards the cost of a master's degree required for teacher licensure.

The shortage of licensed special education teachers has hit especially hard in the deaf or hard of hearing licensure area. The Minnesota Department of Education's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Group has highlighted this shortage repeatedly, most recently on page 18 of their 2024 biennial report to legislators.<sup>1</sup>

We are aware of at least one school that has waiting lists due to insufficient numbers of teachers holding Deaf and Hard of Hearing licenses. Yet they have numerous aspiring teachers working as paraprofessionals who cannot become licensed due to the cost of a master's degree.

We are grateful to Senator Johnson Stewart for carrying this bill, along with the legislators from both parties who have co-signed. Thank you for your consideration, and we invite you to join us in addressing the severe special education shortage by voting in support of SF0249.

Signed,



Alicia Lane

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<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Department of Education. *Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Biennial Report to the Legislature: 2024*. <https://www.lrl.mn.gov/docs/2024/mandated/241042.pdf>