

Dear Representative

As family members of a severely disabled adult woman, we are deeply concerned about the current movement toward eliminating vocational and life choices for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD).

This movement, based primarily on presumptions without data or research, has left the most vulnerable population and their families, who will be most greatly affected by elimination of options, out of this conversation.

We ask that you strongly support the passage of the following two bills:

HF 3447 – Employment Choice Task Force

HF 4071 – Task Force on subminimum wages membership and duties modified

As family members who have known a person who has severe disabilities, including extreme behavior and other limitations that require constant trained supervision and a consistent environment in order to be successful, we recognize that it is not safe, appropriate, or feasible to expect that all individuals can or should work in a competitive setting. Like thousands of other individuals with I/DD, our relative has thrived in her community disability center, where she currently has the option to participate in day activities or work for a commensurate wage based on her individual ability. She loves having the choice to work and the community of friends, co-workers, and support staff at the center. While we respect the right for people to seek and receive support to work in competitive jobs, we hope that the rights of our family member to continue employment in a fully supported setting will also be respected.

The Employment Choice Task Force bill (HF 3447) seeks to establish a committee that will study the vocational options available to people with all levels of ability, working toward expanding, rather than limiting, choices. HF 4071 seeks to amend a 2021 bill from its original focus of eliminating “subminimum” wages to a focus on increasing opportunities of people with disabilities to earn competitive wages. The proposed amendments will also allow inclusion of people who are most affected by elimination of commensurate wages to have a voice on this task force.

Your support for these two bills will be greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

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