



Opportunity & Dignity for Adults with Disabilities

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March 30, 2022,

Rep. Jennifer Schultz  
Chair, Human Services Finance & Policy Committee  
473 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Schultz and Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf Achieve Services and the people we serve, asking you to please support HF 4071, which shifts to focus of the Task Force on the Elimination of Subminimum Wages from eliminating employment opportunities to creating more options.

Pre-COVID, Achieve served about 195 adults with developmental disabilities. We currently serve 135. Over 50% are working in community jobs at least 2 days per week, and about 60 % do at least some work at our site, sometimes receiving wages below minimum wage but commensurate with their productivity. We have been through multiple DOL audits over the years to ensure that our workers are paid fairly.

The current law creating the Task Force on the Elimination of Subminimum Wages is troubling for several reasons. First, the legislation was passed last year with virtually no opportunity for those most impacted – the workers and families of workers who choose to perform 14c work - to testify or provide their input. And the fact is, thousands of Minnesotans benefit from 14c work and **do not want that employment option to go away!**

Moreover, our workers who perform 14c work have made an *informed choice* to do so. The people we serve are always given choices – they can seek competitive employment in the community, they can perform 14c work at our site, and they can focus on other life-enriching opportunities outside of employment, and most choose some combination of those options. Many choose 14c work because they and/or their families want work in a safe, supported environment, particularly those who are vulnerable and would be at risk in a community job. But it is always their choice.

Despite what you might be hearing from the well-intentioned “advocates,” if 14c opportunities go away, then so will jobs. I can absolutely assure you that eliminating 14c will result in thousands of people losing their only opportunity for opportunity. Some will undoubtedly find competitive work in the community, but for many, community employment will not be a viable option. They will be left with no opportunity to work. Losing jobs means losing not just a paycheck, but dignity, self-respect, friendships, and the chance to contribute to their community. Rather than eliminating employment opportunities, we strongly believe we should be focused on *increasing* those opportunities.

Finally, if you are inclined to oppose HF 4071, then I’d ask you to visit Achieve, and meet with the people who will be losing their jobs if 14c work is eliminated. They’d love to share their stories with you.

Thank you for considering this request. I sincerely hope you can support the inclusion of HF 4071 in the HS Omnibus Bill.

Best regards,

Thomas H. Weaver  
CEO, Achieve Services