

Madam Chair and members of the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement,

We write today on behalf of The Arc Minnesota, Minnesota Disability Law Center, and the Legal Services Advocacy Project to demonstrate support for H.F. 4248 authored by Rep. Moller.

For many years, our organizations have supported proposals related to Minnesota's Consumer Directed Community Supports (CDCS) option of the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers. CDCS offers people with disabilities and their family members more choice and control over their services and supports. People accessing CDCS have more flexibility in hiring staff, setting wages, and purchasing non-traditional goods and services like assistive technology - all of which are cost-effective and reduce constraints on the workforce.

Unfortunately, though, the program's current administrative model does not allow parents and spouses acting as family caregivers to accrue Social Security benefits nor collect unemployment benefits. This also affects their access to Social Security Disability if they become disabled, as well as Medicaid premiums when they reach retirement age. This creates financial instability for parent and spousal caregivers, and acts as a disincentive to the CDCS option - pushing people with disabilities toward more costly, restrictive service models.

Rep. Moller has been working diligently for the last several years to identify solutions that would address these barriers, and we applaud the creative problem-solving represented by H.F. 4248.

Offering family caregivers an option to pay into the state's Secure Choice retirement plan will support the financial stability and economic well-being of parent and spousal caregivers of individuals with disabilities who access the CDCS option - representing a cost neutral, policy-only solution to a years' long problem plaguing many family caregivers.

We thank Rep. Moller for her hard work on behalf of Minnesota's disability community as reflected in this bill, and respectfully request your support for H.F. 4248.

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The Arc Minnesota

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