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Representative Dave Baker
Representative Dave Pinto
Co-Chairs, House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee

March 31, 2025

Re: Support for HF 2039

Dear Chair Baker, Chair Pinto, and Members of the House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee,

I am pleased to write in support of HF 2039, which would make a critical investment in Minnesota's future through the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP).

MYP is a core workforce program that provides one-on-one intensive support to at-risk young people through paid work experience and in-school career counseling. This investment leads to better outcomes for our youth and supports local employers by equipping young workers with the basic skills needed to enter the workforce before they start their first day on the job.

In the City of Minneapolis, we use MYP funds to support the Step Up program. Step Up has been providing essential employment and training opportunities to youth for over 20 years. Since 2003, Step Up has assisted over 34,000 youth with paid summer internship and career exploration opportunities. Step Up interns come from traditionally underrepresented communities: 91% are BIPOC, 45% come from immigrant families, 25% live with disabilities and 12% have barriers such as homelessness or involvement in the foster care or justice system.

Step Up is more than just a work experience. Interns receive mentorship, new skills, and structured support for long-term success. Step Up has a large pool of alumni that are now successfully employed across all sectors, in 15 industries, and includes elected officials across levels of government. To stay competitive, Minnesota needs access to a pipeline of skilled workers. Our state has only 6 jobseekers for every 10 job openings and employers are in need of job-ready workers. Programs like Step Up, funded by MYP dollars, are drivers of economic transformation. Investing in youth today, ensures a diverse, skilled and resilient workforce for Minnesota's future, which will help to sustain and grow our local and state economies.

I urge the committee to support HF 2039. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours Truly,

Mayor Jacob Frey,
City of Minneapolis