



February 19, 2026

Dear Chair Wiklund,

Thank you for taking time to hear from the community about the impacts of federal actions on Minnesotans, and for your support for the statewide youth programming needs assessment passed last session.

We are writing today to share updates about the youth programming study that is currently underway, and to provide additional context to testimony from leaders with the United 4 Youth campaign.

For years, our communities have been facing a lack of investments in our youth, particularly in the approximately 2,000 hours they have out of school each year, including many hours parents are working.

Over the last year, the outlook has gotten worse. This summer, Congress withheld nearly \$7 billion in federal funding for 21st Century Community Learning Grants, one of the most important sources of public funding for youth programming. At the same time, the federal government passed the One Big Bill that imposed strict new eligibility requirements for families with older children that will push eligible households off Medicaid and SNAP food assistance.

This winter, Minnesota youth are facing generational trauma as a result of the federal government. The ICE surge has torn apart families, arrested children and transferred them to detention centers out of state, disrupted learning and evoked fear. Thousands of Minnesota residents had their constitutional rights violated. Families were forced to stay home from work and school, rather than risk being sent out of state without due process. Businesses closed.

At the same time, the State launched surveys for the statewide youth programming needs assessment. The report is due to the Legislature by July 1, 2026. Parents are being asked to share their experiences at a time when many do not feel safe even dropping their kids off at school.

The road ahead will be a challenge. We ask for leadership from the State. This means telling the truth about what's happening and prioritizing Minnesota youth who deserve our faith and investment.

Sincerely,

Brian Fullman and Abdulahi Farah
United 4 Youth