

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kenza Hadj-Moussa, Communications Director, Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
kenza@mnhomelesscoalition.org or 612-386-9556 (cell)

Contact: Jessica Webster, Staff Attorney, Legal Services Advocacy Project
jwebster@mnlisap.org or 651-895-5465 (cell)

March 18, 2014

Bill hearing today: Lawmakers consider removing education barriers for workers on welfare

St. Paul—Minnesota lawmakers are considering a bill to remove education and job training barriers in MFIP*, the state's welfare-to-work program. The MFIP Workforce Education Bill will be heard in a House committee today (March 18, 2014).

Under current law, parents enrolled in MFIP are steered away from education and job training pursuits. Parents are typically in part-time, low-wage, or temporary jobs. The bill would help break the cycle between welfare and low-wage work by encouraging education and allowing parents to earn GEDs and college degrees. About 40% of adults on MFIP lack a high school degree.

“The way the law works today, a parent on the verge of graduating from college is discouraged from finishing their degree if their family receives public assistance. This bill allows parents in the low-wage workforce to compete for better paying jobs. It makes sense for families and the economy.” stated Jessica Webster, staff attorney at the Legal Services Advocacy Project.

To meet federal requirements, the MFIP program expects parents to work, or job search, and accept the first position offered. The bill would not pay for classes but rather remove barriers by counting education and job training as approved MFIP activities. The MFIP Workforce Education Bill (HF2458/SF1739) was approved unanimously by the House Health and Human Services Policy committee on March 6.

###

Prosperity for All is a statewide alliance of organizations working toward a more prosperous Minnesota.

www.mnhomelesscoalition.org/prosperity-for-all

MFIP Workforce Education Bill [Fact Sheet](#)

*Minnesota Family Investment Program, pronounced M-FIP