



September 22, 2022

Representative Jim Davnie
443 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Ruth Richardson
403 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

via electronic delivery

Dear Chairs Davnie and Richardson,

Like many Minnesotans, we were pleased to hear that charges have been formally brought by the U.S. Department of Justice against those believed to be responsible for the largest case of pandemic related fraud in the country. The alleged crimes are especially despicable not only because the perpetrators fleeced taxpayers, but because the scheme stole nearly \$250 million in funding that was intended to help feed children during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those responsible should be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

As lawmakers, it is important that we provide necessary oversight of how taxpayer dollars are spent. That is why we are calling on House leadership to hold committee hearings to determine the Minnesota Department of Education's (MDE) role in the scandal.

The Minnesota Senate Education Finance and Policy Committee held several hearings this past session on MDE's administration of food service programs and issued an interim report earlier this month sharing their findings.

To date, the House of Representatives has not held a single hearing on what is believed to be one of the largest cases of fraud in state history.

Gov. Walz called on September 22nd for an investigation into the decision by Judge Guthmann to restart payments — we agree completely. Minnesotans deserve answers why the Minnesota Department of Education entered into a stipulation agreement with Feeding our Future to restart payments, and why no attempt was made to appeal the decision. It's time for the Minnesota House to exercise its oversight authority and get answers to these critical questions.

We look forward to hearing from you soon and pledge to work in good faith to find answers to the questions Minnesotans are asking in the wake of this week's news.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Representative Ron Kresha in blue ink.

Representative Ron Kresha
Republican Lead, Education Finance Committee

Handwritten signature of Representative Sondra Erickson in blue ink.

Representative Sondra Erickson
Republican Lead, Education Policy Committee

Handwritten signature of Representative Kurt Daudt in blue ink.

Representative Kurt Daudt
Minority Leader

Handwritten signature of Representative Anne Neu Brindley in blue ink.

Representative Anne Neu Brindley
Deputy Minority Leader