



March 21, 2023

Senator Wiklund, Chair  
Health and Human Services  
95 University Avenue W.  
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2107  
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: SF 2141 – Paperwork Reduction

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) thank Senator Mitchell for authoring SF 2141, legislation that authorizes a child welfare paperwork reduction study, with accompanying recommendations.

As a state supervised, county administered system, Minnesota county child protection (CP) social workers have the privilege and responsibility of engaging and working with children and families on a daily basis with the primary focus on children remaining safely in the care of their parents. In situations where out of home placement becomes necessary to assure child safety, the goal and the work of the child protection worker/agency is to engage and build a relationship, while focusing on safely reunifying the child with their caregiver. In recent years, the information system (Social Service Information System (SSIS)) has become outdated, glitchy and burdensome, while the paperwork requirements have become more complex and onerous. This has resulted in county front-line staff spending more time in front of screens than serving children and families, resulting in the CP workforce being buried in paperwork and administrative demands (SSIS clicks) – a contributing factor to child protection staff turnover, which in some counties has reached upwards of 50% within the last three years. The recent [Office of the Legislative Auditor report](#) highlighted this experience in their finding that “Plans developed by child protection agencies that document the actions parents must take to reunite with their children are often lengthy and difficult to understand. across the state.”

Not only do AMC and MACSSA strongly encourage lawmakers to make significant investments in our aging, outdated and cumbersome information technology systems, including SSIS, we encourage legislators to authorize an important review of the policies structuring the paperwork requirements. As a system, we call on you to support the child protection workforce by ensuring the administrative and paperwork functions do not impede/prevent front-line staff spending quality time engaging and supporting Minnesota children and families. AMC and MACSSA welcome the opportunity to work with the Department of Human Services and tribes to address this critical issue.



Association of  
Minnesota Counties



MACSSA

Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators

Sincerely,

Angie Thies, Child Wellbeing Policy Analyst  
Association of Minnesota Counties