

March 7, 2023

## Support for SF2397

Dear Chair Hoffman and members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

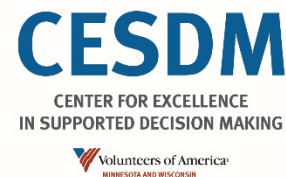
Nearly three years ago, the legislature passed significant reforms and updates to Minnesota's guardianship and conservatorship laws. For the first time, Minnesota recognized the critical role that supported decision-making plays for older adults and persons with disabilities. Under those changes, courts ordering guardianship now must ensure that all less restrictive means to guardianship, including supported decision-making, have been tried before ordering a guardianship. At that time, however, no funding was provided to help organizations and counties expand their supported decision-making services. While guardianship is appropriate in some instances, it should be the very last alternative considered as it can greatly restrict a persons' ability to make decisions about where to live, their healthcare decisions, or even if they can vote.

**Supported decision-making is a best practice in helping individuals with cognitive or other limitations make informed choices.** It respects the autonomy of the individual living with disabilities or cognitive impairment, while intentionally supporting individuals to build their confidence and competence in decision-making.

**SF 2397 establishes a new grant program administered by DHS for organizations and counties to develop and enhance their supported decision-making services to persons with disabilities, older adults, and their support networks of family and friends.** This grant funding program will increase access to the service, and facilitates a culture shift toward supported decision-making service options as a first, more person-centered choice.

We respectfully request your support of SF2397 to increase supported decision-making services for vulnerable adults, and reduce unnecessary guardianships.

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Additional Supporters Include:

Dakota County  
Ramsey County  
Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care  
Alzheimer's Association  
Minnesota Gerontological Society  
Advocates for Vulnerable Adults  
Human Services of Faribault & Martin Counties  
Relationship Safety Alliance FKA: Mid MN Women's Center  
Whispering Oak Place  
Elder Voice Advocates  
Alexandra House, Inc.  
Guardian Counsel Law Office  
North Shore Health  
Financial and Retailers Protection Association  
Right at Home Twin Cities  
Minneapolis Area Senior Workers Association  
Institute on Community Integration  
See Vang Thai LLC Attorney at Law  
Sletten Law Office  
LR Services, LLC  
Robert McLeod, Attorney