



April 4, 2024

Chair Kari Dziedzic
3113 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Ranking Minority Member Bruce Anderson
2209 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for SF 5244 – Guardianship Task Force

To Chair Dziedzic, Lead Representative Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

Guardianship matters are a top priority for Elder Voice Advocates (EVA) as we strive to promote quality care and safeguard the rights of vulnerable adults, whether due to age or disability.

Minnesota has 35,000 persons under guardianship and approximately 3,000 more are added each year. EVA has been working with stakeholders to seek solutions to preserve the rights of vulnerable adults, reduce the risk of harm to those under guardianship, balance the important interests of the guardian, and increase alternatives to guardianship and supported decision making. We convened approximately 27 stakeholders beginning last summer to discuss these important issues. Out of that conversation, as well as a parallel conversation with the Minnesota Council on Disability on strengthening rights and alternatives to guardianship, the task force was proposed in its current form in SF5244. Both advocates and guardians have expressed broad support for the task force.

We believe the time is right for funding in 2024 to convene this important conversation and to provide specific outcomes in a report to the legislature. If funding cannot be secured until 2025, a budget year, we support passing SF5244 contingent upon funding in 2025. It is important to build on the momentum of the current conversations to work toward substantive changes and to fulfill the state's policy of serving and protecting those under guardianship.

Thank you for your support for SF5244.

Sincerely,
/s/ Suzanne Scheller
Suzanne Scheller, Legal Advisor
Elder Voice Advocates