

March 5, 2024

Re: SF 3989 – Opposition to Section 6

Senator Hoffman and Members of the Committee:

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center supports the use of alternatives to guardianship such as Supported Decision-Making, as guardianship should be the very last alternative considered in addressing an individual's needs. As introduced, Section 6 in SF 3989 adds provisions to our guardianship statute that are unnecessary and may incentive guardianship when it is not appropriate.

Last session, Sen. Rasmussen's bill funded, for the first time ever, dedicated grants for Supported Decision-Making. We need to build on these temporary grants and find permanent solutions to create a Supported Decision-Making infrastructure, as it is a best practice in helping individuals with disabilities, older adults, and others with cognitive limitations make informed choices while maintaining autonomy.

We have been in discussion with hospitals and other entities that are in a difficult position of needing to discharge individuals to safe places. We appreciate their willingness to consider other approaches, and we'd like to reiterate that Section 6 is not the solution. Rather than the changes proposed in this bill, investments in our Supported Decision-Making infrastructure are the best alternative to ensure individuals are given informed choice.

Sincerely,

Amanda Vickstrom  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Elder Justice Center