



# Ramsey County ICWA Advisory Board

April 11, 2024

Dear Legislators,

The Ramsey County ICWA Advisory Board strongly supports SF 4480/HF 4838, which expands the protections of the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act (MIFPA).

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), enacted in 1978, maintains the best interests of Indian children and preserves their culture and tribal connections. The requirement for establishing guidelines for child custody proceedings involving Indian children ensures their protection from unwarranted removal from their families and communities. Minnesota strengthened these protections in 1985, 2015, and 2023 through MIFPA.

The Ramsey County ICWA Advisory Board works closely with the Ramsey County Social Services Department and the Second Judicial District to advise on issues impacting Indian children within the child protection system. Several of the proposed amendments in the MIFPA bill would directly benefit and protect the Indian families we work with. In particular, the ability for tribal representatives to participate in court hearings remotely without prior request will mean that representatives will be able to participate more fully and more often. Removing the barriers of filing fees and the requirement to use the court's electronic filing system for tribes will also facilitate this.

These amendments will greatly benefit the families we work with in Ramsey County. The MIFPA workgroup has engaged with many stakeholders, including community partners, community organizations, the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators, the Minnesota County Attorneys Association, and the Association of Minnesota Counties.

Thank you for considering this request and the impact it has on our families. We strongly support this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sadie Hart". The script is cursive and fluid.

Sadie Hart, Chair  
Ramsey County ICWA Advisory Board