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April 25, 2025

Senator John Marty  
Chair, Senate Finance  
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3235

Senator Eric Pratt  
Ranking Minority Member, Senate Finance  
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 2217

**RE: SF 3054 – Task Force on Guardianship**

- Article 2 (Disability Services), Section 78 (Repealer), Subd 3 – Legislative Task Force on Guardianship
- Article 14 (Other Agency Appropriations), Section 2 Council on Disability – Legislative Task Force on Guardianship Funding Cancellation
- Appendix (Repealed Minnesota Statutes: S3054-1) – Legislative Task Force on Guardianship

Dear Chair Marty, Senator Pratt and Committee members:

**I am writing in strong opposition to the proposed repealing / cancellation of the Legislative Task Force on Guardianship. The Task Force was approved in the 2024 session and convened earlier this year with meetings in March and April.**

I am a Parental Guardian for my 36-year-old developmentally disabled son.

I have 18 years' experience as a Guardian in four states (the last 8 in MN), handling a wide range of advocacy and day-to-day support needs, and engaged in multiple disability and guardianship advocacy organizations. While I am not a member of the Task Force, I have been closely engaged through the process last year, attending Task Force meetings this year, and providing added private / parental guardianship input.

**Key points in favor of MAINTAINING the Task Force:**

- **I support the House position to maintain the Task Force on Guardianship.** The House did not pursue repealing / cancellation. No change is included in HF 2434.
- The documented goals of the Task Force are more important and urgent now than upon Task Force approval a year ago. Budgetary pressures risk greater instability for this vulnerable population.

- Strengthening supported decision making and ensuring guardianship is only a necessary last option is a strong need the Task Force is focused on to provide greater guidance.
- The Task Force is not an impediment to urgent guardianship legislation needed now. Open communication and collaboration are identifying top priorities to pursue. Several positive guardianship-related bills are working through the session now. **This proposal to repeal / cancel the Task Force is the only bill which is counter-productive to improving guardianship in Minnesota.**
- A Guardianship Evaluation by the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) is a great tool for the Task Force. The report is not a substitution for the important work to be done. It aligns with Task Force goals, and provides a blueprint to support and expedite solutions.
- The funding allocation of \$400,000 over two years could likely be reduced if that is a factor in maintaining the Task Force. The Wilder Foundation consultants have been facilitating the meetings process and materials. As the MN Council on Disabilities is the “owner” of the Task Force there may be internal and/or Council member alternatives. The 2024 Task Force legislation calls for a final report to be presented by January 16, 2027. I personally believe this can and should be expedited. The needs are more urgent. And, costs could be further reduced.
- The Legislative Task Force for Guardianship gained strong legislative interest and support one year ago when approved. Member selections and appointments were completed in 2024 with stakeholders representing all aspects of guardianship in Minnesota.
- The MN Council on Disabilities has been a strong supporter in their development and implementation of the Task Force. The Council staff remain neutral awaiting the outcome. They have communicated Task Force status as “.....due to pending legislative actions, the Guardianship Task Force is temporarily paused.” The last meeting was April 1. **Elimination of this cancellation legislation now will allow for the next monthly meeting in May, avoiding any lapse in meeting cadence.**
- Minimal public or Task Force member input to this Finance Committee should not be perceived as a lack of interest or acceptance. **Communication of this proposal has stayed under the radar.** I learned of this before the Task Force members were informed, through my broad engagement. No communication of an author, initial bill submitted, or any reasoning has been provided to Task Force membership.

- **The only change I would recommend** to the 2024 Task Force legislation is to add one member seat for a **Private / Parental Guardian**. Only 1 of 27 seats is designated for a “Private Guardian”. The vast majority of guardianships in Minnesota are “private”.

**Current Task Force content within SF 3054:**

126.21	<b><u>Subd. 3. Legislative Task Force on Guardianship.</u></b>
	<b><u>Laws 2024, chapter 127, article</u></b>
126.22	<b><u>46, section 39, is repealed.</u></b>
279.20	Sec. 2. <b><u>COUNCIL ON DISABILITY</u></b>
279.21	<b><u>Legislative Task Force On Guardianship</u></b>
279.22	<b><u>Funding Cancellation</u></b>
279.23	<b><u>Any unencumbered and unexpended amount</u></b>
279.24	<b><u>of the fiscal year 2025 appropriation</u></b>
279.25	<b><u>referenced in Laws 2024, chapter 127, article</u></b>
279.26	<b><u>53, section 4, for the Legislative Task Force</u></b>
279.27	<b><u>on Guardianship, estimated to be \$400,000,</u></b>
279.28	<b><u>is canceled.</u></b>

Repealed Minnesota Session Laws: S3054-1

***Laws 2024, chapter 127, article 46, section 39***

Sec. 39. **LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON GUARDIANSHIP.**

**Thank you for your consideration.**

Sincerely,

Mark Stafford