



April 28, 2025

Senate Finance Committee  
Chair Senator John Marty

Chair Marty and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and the Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA), we thank you for working to assemble proposals to address the needs of Minnesota's most vulnerable residents. In a state supervised, county administered system, our county workforce is on the front lines of implementing federal, state and local policies and regulations.

We recognize that state policymakers have difficult choices to make as you look at potential federal headwinds and a grim state economic outlook that overlays with increased demand for services to protect our most vulnerable residents and their families. Thank you for this opportunity to share our collective county thoughts on SF 2669 (Wiklund), particularly the provisions addressing the needs of Minnesota's children and families.

We are grateful that SF 2669 proposes \$10 million for modernizing the Social Service Information System (SSIS). However, this investment is not enough to cover the full cost of replacement and would only continue the patchwork system of updates and improvements that have made the system so unwieldy in the first place. In recent years, we've seen several policy changes in this area, with the county workforce unfortunately being required to develop IT workarounds to implement the changes due to the outdated infrastructure. We encourage the Senate to consider counties' request for \$40 million for SSIS, which, paired with the \$10 million appropriated last year, would draw down a federal match to fund a complete overhaul of the system. This would move us closer to a child protection system where workers can spend more time supporting children and families than completing data entry and administrative functions.

Notably, SSIS is the technology platform utilized for child protection and is a critical component of successful implementation of any new child welfare policies, including the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (The Act). We thank the Health and Human Services committee for its attention to addressing inequities that exist in our child welfare system. We know that to successfully implement The Act across all 87 counties, there must be investments in expanded services and increased staffing with supports. We remain concerned that full implementation in 2027 may be jeopardized if there is not a runway for counties to implement concrete services (like Community and Family Resource Centers) and build staffing capacity in advance of expectations for full implementation. We urge you to consider resources in advance of 2027 so that counties can be prepared for success. Additionally, with staffing and uniform implementation concerns in mind, we ask that you



consider making case review and active effort reporting a state function, as opposed to a county responsibility.

Counties know that despite SF3149 not being included in the omnibus bill, discussions are ongoing about how to support the County-Administered Rural Medical Assistance (CARMA) program, and we hope for its inclusion in a final bill.

In closing, we'd also like to express our gratitude for the inclusion of a number of provisions that support county social service programs, including access to audio-only telehealth services, proposals to strengthen housing stabilization services, a report examining rate methodologies and licensing standards for psychiatric residential treatment facilities (PRTFs), and \$1.2 million for a PRTF in Clay County. Additionally, we support language allowing for a child welfare response to concerns of habitual truancy and educational neglect. The aforementioned funding for community and family resource centers and prevention services will also support this work. Finally, we are committed to working in the remaining weeks of session to address concerns in the area of relative and kin licensing provisions to avoid unintended cost shifts to counties.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Senator Melissa Wiklund