



March 4, 2025

Re: Support for SF 1786

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

Ain Dah Yung (Our Home) Center strongly supports SF 1786 to improve kinship licensing and support for relative-kin caregivers. Meaning "Our Home" in Ojibwe, Ain Dah Yung Center provides a healing place within the community for American Indian youth and families to thrive in safety and wholeness.

Providing housing stabilization through our emergency shelter, transitional living, and permanent supportive housing programs, we understand the importance of building relationships that support the long-term success of the young people we serve.

When American Indian children are in out-of-home care it is critical that they remain with family and within their community. As of 2022, American Indian children are sixteen times more likely than white children to be in out-of-home care, which disrupts their ability to foster their familial, community, and cultural ties. When foster care is provided by relative-kin caregivers, children are more likely to find stability, avoid the trauma of multiple placements, and maintain connections to their Tribal Nations, cultures, and communities.

This modification to improve kinship licensing and support for relative-kin caregivers ensures that children can grow up in supportive, stable homes with family and maintain connections to their Tribal communities.

Thank you for considering this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

*Sheri Riemers*

Sheri Riemers  
Executive Director