



March 4, 2025

Senator Melissa Wiklund, Chair  
Committee on Health and Human Services  
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 2107  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

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

I am writing to share my enthusiastic support of kin-specific licensing standards for foster parents, and the many positive impacts this flexibility will provide to children and families. SF1786 would bring this flexibility to Minnesota.

I run the Child Welfare Playbook, a coalition of all child welfare agencies in the country that comes together regularly to surface and scale promising practices. Much of our focus is on supporting kinship caregivers. We were honored to coauthor the new model standards for kin-specific licensing — a process that involved over 430 people including agency social workers, kinship caregivers, and subject matter experts.

Minnesota was a leader in contributing to the development of these model standards. In particular, your policy to require community-based fingerprinting locations every 35 miles across the state has been copied by many other jurisdictions at our encouragement, helping to make fingerprinting more accessible and friendly (as opposed to waiting in a police station, for example).

Nearly every child welfare agency in the nation has publicly committed to launch kin-specific licensing, with 12 already live. You can see the national commitments and progress [on this map](#). SF1786 would position Minnesota as a leader in supporting kin.

Kin-specific licensing is critical for children with adults who know and love them. Too often, rigid licensing requirements prevent a child in foster care from living with an otherwise-willing adult. Children in foster care achieve better outcomes on every possible measure when they are with kin. These new standards do not sacrifice or minimize safety. Rather, they recognize the unique needs of kinship. For example, it may be completely appropriate for a teenager to sleep on their grandmother's couch, even while it would be inappropriate to place a teenager in foster care on a stranger's couch.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marina Nitze".

Marina Nitze  
Head  
Child Welfare Playbook  
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