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Chair Wiklund and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Minnesota Senate
95 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55155

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

On behalf of North Homes Children and Family Services, I am writing to express our support for SF1786, to create a kinship standard for licensing and support for kinship caregivers. This legislation is a step forward in ensuring that kinship caregivers have the resources and support they need to provide loving, stable, and nurturing homes for the children they care for. As an organization, we are dedicated in supporting kinship families throughout the licensing process in order to help navigate the barriers currently in place, we recognize the importance of kinship caregiving. Kinship caregivers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other relatives; play a crucial role in maintaining children's connections to their families and cultural backgrounds. They provide a sense of familiarity and continuity during times of crisis. Without support and a standardized licensing process, kinship caregivers often face barriers that make it difficult to provide the best possible care.

SF1786 ensures that kinship caregivers have access to the same resources and support as non-kin foster parents. Establishing a kinship standard for licensing and support will help to address the challenges they face, including training, financial assistance, and legal protection, and will ensure that children placed with family members are able to thrive. We commend your efforts to improve the lives of children and families in Minnesota and strongly urge your support for SF1786. This legislation is an important step toward building a stronger, more supportive system for kinship caregivers, which ultimately benefits the children in their care.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Luke Jurek
Foster Care and Adoption Program Director
North Homes Children and Family Services