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LETTER IN SUPPORT OF SF 1025,

March 17, 2025

To: Chair Wiklund, Senator Abeler, and Members of Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

The State Guardian ad Litem Board was established by legislation in 2010 to administer a statewide, independent guardian ad litem program to advocate for the best interest of children in Juvenile and Family courts. The mission of the State Guardian ad Litem Board is to provide well trained, effective guardians ad litem to advocate for safe and permanent homes for the children we represent in Juvenile and Family courts. The State Guardian ad Litem Board, while working in the child welfare and family court system, seeks justice for children by being sensitive to and competent in areas of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, and the long-term impact of violence and abuse on child development.

We are in support of SF 1025, “Foster children receiving Supplemental Security Income benefits trust establishment and appropriation” and are supportive of the goal to uphold the best interests of children and youth in the foster care system.

During the 2024 legislative session, language was passed that included a requirement for guardians ad litem to disclose information to a child 13 years of age or older regarding the handling of financial benefits paid by SSI on behalf of the child to a financially responsible agency. The language also required the financially responsible agency to disclose the same information. (see lines 2.7 to 2.11 of SF 1025). We did not support this language, because we think the duty of disclosure properly belongs to the financially responsible agency and not the child’s guardian ad litem. We support deleting this requirement which will not affect the guardian’s duty and responsibility to advocate for the child’s best interests, including what is in the child’s financial interests under law.

Thank you to Senator Abeler and coauthors for their leadership on SF 1025.

We acknowledge that stakeholders such as the Department of Children, Family, and Youth will continue to guide implementation of this new language.

Signed,

Ann S. Ahlstrom

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Board Chair
Minnesota Guardian ad Litem Board