



February 21, 2025

Re: Support for SF1548/HF1276

Dear Lawmakers:

Ain Dah Yung Center strongly supports the modification to Northstar Care for Children for foster children under the age of 6 who reach permanency with relatives or within the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act (MIFPA) placement preferences. 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.

When American Indian children are not able to reunify with their parents after child welfare involvement it is critical that they remain with family and within their community. The lower financial benefits for children who reach permanency under the age of 6 makes this difficult, especially for relatives who did not plan to take custody of a child and do not have the financial means to care for an additional child, but did so because they can provide a loving home.

Families with greater financial support are less likely to reengage with the child welfare system and have increased stability. This stability is essential for American Indian children to retain and foster connections with their families and Tribal communities. The lack of financial resources should not be a barrier for a child to reach permanency with relatives or with their Tribal communities.

This modification to the Northstar Care for Children program ensures that children can grow up in supportive, stable homes and maintain connections to their families and Tribal communities.

Thank you for considering this important piece of legislation.

Respectfully,

*Sheri Riemers*

Sheri Riemers  
Executive Director