



Senator Melissa Wiklund
Health & Human Services Committee
SF1548 / HF1276: Northstar Care for Children

Wednesday, March 29, 2025

Dear Chair Wiklund, & members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

The Birth Justice Collaborative urges you to consider SF1548/HF1276 as a strategy to support young children in foster care, by building paths to permanent, safe, nurturing homes, and investing in lifelong relationships with their caregivers. Children under the age of six years old need stability to develop trusting relationships with their caregivers—these relationships create the foundation that all future learning and development is built on.

SF1548/HF1276 supports caregivers and foster parents that want to become part of a young child's permanent family through adoption, transfer of legal custody, or other permanent placement. The Northstar Care for Children reduces the cost associated with entering into Northstar Adoption Assistance or Kinship Assistance programs, and maintains the child's benefit levels throughout the process.

The Birth Justice Collaborative believes Northstar Care for Children supports *all* children in foster care, but the American Indian and African American children that have been historically overrepresented in the welfare system have the most to gain by the passage of this bill. For children unable to be reunited with their parents, Northstar Care for Children has been shown to reduce the number of children leaving foster care without a permanent family, reduce the length of stay for children in out-of-home care, and increase the percentage of children who receive permanent placement within two years of entering into foster care.

Please join us in supporting SF1548/HF1276, to help Minnesota's youngest and most vulnerable children are able to grow up healthy in permanent, safe, and nurturing homes.

Sincerely,

The Birth Justice Collaborative

Akhmiri Sekhr-Ra, Cultural Wellness Center,
Louise Matson, Division of Indian Work,
Rev. Dr. Alika Galloway, Liberty Northside Healing Space,
Ruth Buffalo, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center,
Dr. Antony Stately, Native American Community Clinic,
Makeda Zulu, Urban Research & Outreach-Engagement Center, University of Minnesota