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**Growing Families
Enriching Lives**

February 25, 2025

Re: HF1276 / SF1548 – Northstar Care for Children Benefits Modification

Dear Chair and Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing in support of HF1276 (Northstar Care for Children Benefits for Children Under the Age of Six Modification) as the Executive Director of EVOLVE Family Services. Our agency has been providing child-centered family services in Minnesota for over 47 years, and since 2016, has been a leader in providing Kinship Foster Care services for children and families involved in the child welfare system.

EVOLVE specializes in serving kinship caregivers, many of whom care for children who are under the age of six years old. As outlined by this bill, we have witnessed numerous cases where a child's adoption is further delayed until the child's 6th birthday to receive additional funding support. We also have many families who have shared how incredibly challenging it is for their family to unexpectedly cover the cost of an additional child(ren) in their home without this compensation maintained at 100% post-permanency. We support providing as much financial benefit to the family as possible to assist in the unexpected nature of providing kinship care long term, and to strengthen successful permanency outcomes for children.

Sincerely,

Susannah Barnes, LSW, CSW
Executive Director

Dedicated to a world where everyone has nurturing, permanent, and supportive familial relationships.