



March 20, 2025

Senator Wiklund
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: SF 1548 – Northstar Care for Children Program

Dear Senator Wiklund and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of County Social Services Agencies (MACSSA) we offer contingent support for SF 1548, a bill that modifies the Northstar Care for Children program.

Enacted in 2015, the Northstar Care for Children program assists families caring for children in foster care and supports permanency through adoption or transfer of permanent legal and physical custody (TPLPC) for eligible children who cannot be reunified with their parents. The language proposed in SF 1548, alters the Northstar Care for Children reimbursement for families for people who adopt/receive a transfer of legal custody of children under the age of 6 from the current .5 rate to the full rate of subsidy. With this change, there will be an increase in post-permanency payments at both the county and state level.

Historically, Minnesota Counties are responsible for approximately 40% share of Northstar Adoption Assistance and Northstar Kinship Assistance, with the state's contribution being approximately 60%. We anticipate that if this bill passes there will be increased costs, with a proportional share of those costs occurring at the county level.

MACSSA supports the changes offered to the Northstar Care for Children Program if counties are held fiscally harmless.

Sincerely,

Angie Thies
Child Wellbeing Policy Analyst
Association of Minnesota Counties

Matt Freeman
Executive Director, MACSSA
Human Services Policy Analyst, AMC

Cc: Senator Mary Kunesch