



Mission:

To address the socioeconomic conditions in the St. Paul Indian community through systems advocacy, policy development and community participation.

February 21, 2025

Re: Support for SF1548/HF1276

Dear Lawmakers:

St. Paul Indians in Action (SIA) strongly supports the modification to the Northstar Care for Children Pre-School Entry Alternate Rate for children who reach permanency with relatives or within the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act (MIFPA) placement preferences.

Under the Northstar Care for Children program, children who reach permanency while under the age of 6 receive approximately 50% of the financial support older children receive. This alternate rate negatively impacts younger children in the foster care system by creating financial barriers for their relative care providers.

American Indian children are sixteen times more likely than white children to be in out-of-home care. When children are placed outside of their families and communities this does not allow American Indian children to foster their familial, community, and cultural ties. It is vital for American Indian children to remain with family and within their community when reunification with their parents is not an option. 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.

Sincerely,

Co-Chair – Sheri Riemers

Sheri Riemers
