

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



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March 25, 2025

Senator Melissa H. Wiklund, Chair
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
2107 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave W
St Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for SF 2349-County-Involved Youth

Chair Wiklund and Committee Members,

I am writing today on behalf of the Washington County Board in support of SF 2349. This legislation, developed by seven metro counties working collaboratively, is critical to addressing the urgent need for improvements in how we serve youth with complex mental health and behavioral needs. The end result will be a regional continuum of care for serving these youth no matter how they enter the county systems, using a whole-person, cross-system approach.

As recommended by the Working Group on Youth Interventions, establishing a regional approach will address the overlapping of juvenile justice and human services systems to provide placement and treatment options across the continuum. The regional framework will help counties to leverage individual and collective assets and resources, identify gaps, and develop solutions.

To implement the regional framework, the participating counties have identified legislative changes which will have an immediate and positive impact on the continuum of care. These include:

- Forming a legislative task force to revise and update Minn. R. 2960
- Addressing placement options for youth
- Removing a moratorium on new beds for foster care homes
- Beginning to implement the rate study recommendations for non-residential youth programming.

Washington County is deeply involved and committed to the regional framework. We firmly believe this approach will meet the needs of these youth and their families.

I urge your support for this effort, as we work to meet the needs of Minnesota's youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stanley J. Karwoski".

Stan Karwoski, County Board Chair
Washington County Board of Commissioners – District 2

*We strive to provide exceptional services that enhance quality of life and
promote a safe, healthy, and welcoming community for all.*

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