



Lutheran
Social Service
of Minnesota

MINNESOTA
ELDER JUSTICE
CENTER



MINNESOTA
CONSORTIUM FOR
CITIZENS WITH
DISABILITIES



Chair John Hoffman
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2111
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hoffman and Members of the Committee:

We are writing in support of SF 2310, which will extend the availability of funding to support Minnesota's network of supported decision-making practice.

Our organizations believe all people have the right to make decisions, have control in their lives, advocate for themselves, and get support from trusted allies as they make decisions. Yet for too long, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, older adults, and those with mental health support needs have been subjected to restrictive guardianships that strip them of their civil rights and decision-making authority. Supported decision-making is an alternative to guardianship that helps an individual to understand the nature and consequences of potential personal and financial decisions.

In 2023, the legislature authorized a one-time appropriation of \$4.55 million to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to award grants to provide and promote supported decision-making services as an alternative to guardianship. In July and August of 2024, five organizations were awarded grants. Grant activities include education to prevent unnecessary guardianship, statewide guardianship consultation line, restoration of rights of individuals currently under guardianship, preventing and reducing the use of guardianship and conservatorship, including as a tool for hospital discharge, and supporting individuals exiting incarceration who are at risk of guardianship.

With the program rolling out later than anticipated, SF 2310 would allow grant recipients to access funding through the end of FY 2026, rather than returning unspent money to the general fund. These dollars represented the first sustainable funding pool to invest in supported decision-making and have had a measurable, positive impact for Minnesotans. This program also reduces human services spending due to reduced court expenses, delayed use of rehabilitation services and waiver utilization, and decreased emergency room visits. Extending the timeline of the grant program would ensure all available dollars can be spent and help realize the full intent of the original legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration in hearing this bill.

Sincerely,

Amanda Vickstrom
Executive Director
Minnesota Elder Justice Center

Tina Rucci
Public Policy Director
The Arc Minnesota



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