

**House Human Services Committee
67th Legislative Session
Representative Robin Weisz-Chair**

Chairman Weisz and House Human Service Committee,

Please accept this testimony in a support of HB 1354. I applaud and welcome the establishment of a commission on guardianships. This is a concern to me as the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs because ND Veterans have guardianships appointed to them and I am aware of the current lack of resources such as funding and providers.

While there are several entities currently involved in various guardianship programs having a commission and eventually a director will provide a single point of contact for the coordination of these programs. A commission can provide a clear overview of the need for these services as well as develop plans to address those needs.

While I support HB 1354 I feel it necessary to point out that these programs are currently under funded.

- The Guardianship Grants funding appropriation through HB 1015 is at a governor recommendation of \$1,950,000. The real need is at \$2,500,000 a shortfall of \$ 550,000.
- HB 1354 requires funding of \$437,000 from sources not clearly identified in the bill. I ask this committee to ensure the \$1,950,000 for guardianships is not utilized for the commission and director expenses.
- I would urge the proper funding of the guardianship programs during the 2021-2023 biennium.

The Guardianship programs protect the most vulnerable of ND Citizens. These programs should be the highest priority for ND Legislators to fund.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lonnie Wangen
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