

House Human Services Committee
Representative Robin Weisz - Chairman
Testimony per House Bill 1354 | February 2, 2021

Chairman Weisz and Members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Margo Haut. I am Founder & Director of “Guardian Angels, Inc”, a nonprofit corporation established in 2014 located in Jamestown serving throughout ND. I come before you, today to testify and respectfully request your support of House Bill 1354.

Prior to the launch of Guardian Angels, Inc. I assisted a dear friend with her son who was in crisis due to a severe mental illness. Upon resolve, my friend had an inquiry that has stayed with me “what happens to those people that have nobody?” At the time, I did not have an answer...today, I do! The hope would be to have access to a Guardian.

I share this experience, as it was instrumental in the founding of Guardian Angels, Inc. Our slogan is “Putting People First” with the vision of providing services, being available 24/7 and giving a voice to those who cannot advocate for themselves. Serving as Guardian for our Protected Persons is the most challenging yet rewarding work I’ve done.

From my perspective, the consideration of the Commission on Guardianship presented in HB 1354 is a step in the right direction. The Commission on Guardianship would be the oversight needed to ensure training for the National and State certifications, availability to meet the requirements such as monthly face to face visits but when all is said & done, accountability for the services provided to our Protected Persons crucial in their vulnerable time of need.

Strong efforts are made by Guardian Angels, Inc. to maintain these principles. As President and Member of GAND- Guardianship Association

of ND, I've had the opportunity to establish professional working relationships with the Guardianship Entities of active GAND Board Members. I can assure You these Entities mirror the same efforts of Guardianship Services.

One other area of similarity for Entities of Guardianship Services throughout ND are Referrals that occur on a regular basis. Currently, Guardian Angels, Inc. has seven individuals on our waiting list. As previously mentioned, communication and/or collaboration occurs amongst the Guardianship Entities of active GAND Board Members, this includes the availability to meet the current need of Guardianship Services.

I reiterate that Guardian Angels, Inc. is in support of HB 1354. With it, comes much needed change. Because of it, apprehension. Ultimately, there's People behind the Paper. It is my hope that we do not lose sight of this fact nor deter the success Protected Persons have experienced not only with Guardian Angels, Inc. but several Guardianship Entities throughout ND.

Chairman Weisz and Members of the House Human Services Committee
I respectfully ask support of House Bill 1354.

Thank you for your time and consideration.