

House Bill 1015
Government Operations Division, House Appropriations
Testimony by Audrey Uhrich, Program Director,
Guardian and Protective Services (GaPS) Bismarck, ND
January 13, 2021

Chair Vigesaa and members of the Committee.

I am Audrey Uhrich, the Program Director for Guardian and Protective Services.

We are a non-profit agency that can be appointed by the court to serve as a public guardian for vulnerable adults.

As a public guardian our responsibility to these vulnerable individuals is to:

- Address the financial, medical, care, and housing needs
- Apply for appropriate benefits and access available resources and services
- And be available 24/7 for all emergent needs.

The services of public guardians are necessary to assist vulnerable adults in our state who are in need of a decision maker in their life.

- They may be unsafe in their home
- They may be being financially exploited
- They may be remaining in terrible situations because they have no decision maker or guardian to advocate for them, stop exploitation, manage bills, set up needed services or find a safe setting for them

Guardian and Protective Services and other public guardian agencies across the State depend on payments from the PASS program in order to provide these necessary services.

Public guardians are an essential piece in the continuum of care for vulnerable adults.

We ask your support to ensure that public guardianship services are available for vulnerable adults in North Dakota by approving the public guardianship funding in the OMB budget and the requested increase to appropriately fund the actual guardianship need.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.