

Senate Appropriations Committee
House Bill 1015 – OMB Budget/Public Guardianship Funding
Testimony by Audrey Uhrich, Program Director,
Guardian and Protective Services (GaPS) Bismarck, ND
March 17, 2021

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Committee I am Audrey Uhrich, the Program Director for Guardian and Protective Services. We are a non-profit organization 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 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.

Public guardians across our State depend on payments through this funding in order to provide these necessary services to individuals who have no resources to pay for the assistance needed. Every week we request new requests to serve as guardian. We will not be able to accept more vulnerable individuals without sufficient funding.

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.