



Minnesota - North Dakota Chapter

**Senate Bill 2015
House Appropriations
Government Operations Division
Representative David Monson, Chair
January 30, 2023**

Chairman Monson and members of the House Appropriations Government Operations Division, my name is Melanie Gaebe, Director of Public Policy for the Alzheimer's Association in North Dakota. Thank you for the opportunity to express the Association's support for the increased funding for guardianship in SB 2015.

There are currently an estimated 15,000 North Dakotans living with dementia and that number is expected to increase to 16,000 by 2025. What this really means is there are currently North Dakotans living with mild cognitive impairment, some of whom are wards in the guardianship system. These guardians are taking responsibility for some of the most difficult decisions that can be made by a person, much less on behalf of a person who is not a family member.

Imagine, you have chosen to become a public guardian. You have a new ward who is an older adult without any family. You are now responsible for making decisions we take for granted every day. You will now be responsible for choosing such things as where your ward lives, who is able to visit that person, how their finances will be handled, and how their health care will proceed.

Now imagine you are the person who is responsible for making these high stakes decisions for another person and you are told that work is valued at \$10 a day. This rate in no way reflects the value and weight of the responsibilities guardians carry in the work they do for our most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.