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January 24, 2023

Senate Appropriations Committee
North Dakota Legislature

Re: SB 2012


Dear Appropriation Committee:

I am writing in support of the proposed increase in funding for guardianships from \$2500-\$3000 per case.

I have been providing attorney services for the establishment of guardianships at a reduced rate for many years, both private pay and those that are eligible for state funding through the guardianship establishment fund. The \$2500 cap on funding for guardianships through the guardianship establishment fund has been in place for many years, and has not kept pace with the cost increases incurred with the establishment of guardianships. The \$2500 is insufficient to compensate the attorney for the petitioner (who drafts almost all of the paperwork to establish the guardianship and attends the hearing), the guardian ad litem (who represents the best interests of the proposed ward and also attends the guardianship hearing) and the court visitor. The guardian ad litem and court visitor are required to meet with or interview the proposed ward, and each has statutory requirements regarding information to be provided to the court, prior to the hearing on the guardianship. In some cases, the guardianships are contested which can then require additional hours of attorney time.

I would suggest that in order to assist in covering the increasing costs of providing guardianship establishment services, that the funding for the establishment of these cases be increased.

Sincerely,


Gene W. Doeling
Attorney at law