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January 24, 2023

Senate Appropriations Committee
North Dakota Legislature

Re: SB 2012

Dear Senators:

I am writing to support the increase in funds for establishing guardianships for impoverished residents of North Dakota to \$3,000. The current maximum is \$2,500.

I have represented the Petitioners in over fifty guardianship and/or conservatorship matters utilizing the Guardianship Establishment Funds over the last ten years. If these funds were not available many people would fall through the cracks and likely cost the State more money due to the emergency services they would end up needing if they did not have a guardian in place to protect them and help them make proactive decisions regarding their mental health and medical care.

When working on these matters my staff and I put in many hours reviewing information received from the Petitioners, who are usually the vulnerable adult protection workers. We draft all of the paperwork and arrange for personal service of the documents on the Ward and any other required interested parties. I attend at least one hearing; more if an emergency guardianship is required. We contact potential Guardian ad Litem and Visitor candidates who might be willing to work with us on these matters for the flat fee of \$750 and \$100 respectively. We also work to secure an Expert Examiner to work with us for no charge since there simply is not enough to pay them with the current funds available. All three of these experts, Guardian ad Litem, Visitor and Expert Examiner are required to submit reports to the Court for all guardianships.

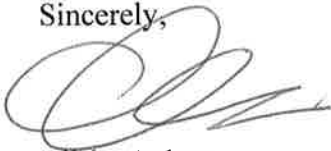
Out of that \$2,500 paid by the State I retain \$1,650 not counting any Court fees or service fees I may need to pay out. When doing the billing on this matters, I invoice at my regular rate and discount any remaining balance once payment is received. I typically discount between \$1,500

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and \$2,000 per case. I have been willing to do that to make sure that the vulnerable adults and Seniors of our State are protected.

I enjoy working on these guardianship matters and helping people get the help they need. An increase in funding would allow me and my colleagues to help even more. I appreciate your consideration of the request for additional funds to continue to work to help North Dakota residents who might not have the resources, get the guardianships they need to stay safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alisha Ankers', written in a cursive style.

Alisha Ankers
Attorney at Law
AA/sen