



February 21, 2025

Dear Members of the House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee,

As an organization committed to the well-being and empowerment of families for fifty years, Families Rising is writing to express our strong support for HF 1276 and to urge your favorable consideration of this important legislation.

At Families Rising, our mission is to amplify those with lived experience, assist adoptive, foster, and kinship parents, educate child welfare professionals, and champion the well-being of children and families. We firmly believe that this bill aligns with our mission and represents a crucial step towards rectifying continued inequities of support within the child welfare system.

Families Rising is a Minnesota-based non-profit that serves foster, adoptive, and kinship families throughout the United States and Canada. One of the programs of Families Rising is the Adoption Subsidy Resource Center which tracks adoption assistance programs throughout the US and Canada.

More than a decade ago, Minnesota moved to create a better and more equal support system for foster, adoptive, and kinship families through the creation of the Northstar Care for Children program. Unfortunately, when Northstar Care for Children was created it created a new system of inequity for children who obtain permanency before their 6th birthday. In some respects, the system is more unfair for children who obtain permanency before their 6th birthday as the level of financial support is relatively similar to the legacy adoption assistance program, but no longer comes with child care, respite care, or funding for specialized camps that had been available to those children under the legacy program.

Minnesota should fully fund the Northstar Care for Children program by eliminating the Alternate Rate that limits payment to 50% of the foster care rate. No child who has been the legal responsibility of the state of Minnesota should have the amount of support available to them limited solely by the age at which they find permanency with a family that the state approves of. The whole purpose of the Northstar Care for Children program was to align the rate available to children in foster care or those who have been adopted or entered into subsidized guardianship. We understand this legislation will

make progress towards eliminating the Alternate Rate for many but not all children who will obtain permanency before the age of 6.

We urge you to give careful consideration to this critical legislation and stand in solidarity with Families Rising in fully supporting the well-being of all Minnesota children who obtain permanency regardless of their age.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We encourage you to support the passage of House File 1276.

Sincerely,

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Ligia N. Cushman, MA
Chief Executive Officer
[Families Rising](#)