



## **Guardianship Testimony 3/4/24 – House State and Local Government Finance and Policy**

Chair Klevorn and members of the committee, I am Kris Sundberg, Executive Director of Elder Voice Advocates. We are a nonprofit that advocates for quality care and protection of the rights of elders and people with disabilities.

Since our inception in 2017, guardianship rights violations and neglect issues have been a frequent problem for these vulnerable adults.

A recent court decision makes MN the only state giving total immunity to guardians. We don't grant blanket immunity to providers such as childcare providers, government workers, financial advisors, beauticians, and even doggy day care providers. This dangerous precedent must be addressed now to protect the rights and safety of those under guardianship.

This bill would also establish of a Task Force on Guardianship to examine and make recommendations to address guardian shortages, compensation, funding, and standards of practice.

Importantly, the Task Force will also review less restrictive alternatives to guardianship that support individuals in making their own decisions and managing their affairs, while still providing assistance and protection when needed.

Additionally, the transparency of this Task Force is critically important as it publicly hears from experts with diverse perspectives, listens to the lived experiences of these vulnerable adults and make recommendations for public policy solutions.

In conclusion, please place the protection of and the legal rights of vulnerable adults over the negligent guardian. Blanket immunity is grossly inappropriate and the need for the Task Force to pursue thoughtful public policy discussion and remedy is essential. Thank you.