



Adult Representation Services

April 2, 2025

Re: Support for H.F. 1862 Modifications to Statewide Office of Appellate Counsel and Training

Chairs Scott, Liebling, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Adult Representation Services Hennepin County, we write in support of bill H.F. 1862. ARS is an independent county organization providing legal representation to families experiencing poverty in civil matters where they are entitled to an attorney, including representing parents/legal custodians in child protection matters.

During the 2023-2024 Minnesota Legislative session, the Legislature passed a bill to establish the Statewide Office of Appellate Counsel and Training. ARS supported establishment of this office for several reasons. Establishing a statewide office to handle appeals was a critical step in ensuring due process for families across Minnesota. Parents and legal custodians have a right to legal counsel at all stages of child protection proceedings, including the right to appeal. However, since Minnesota did not have a centralized resource for coordinating or assigning appeals to attorneys, many families have not been able to exercise their right to appeal. It is important to have a centralized effort surrounding appeals to ensure equitable and comprehensive challenges to the law.

H.F. 1862 makes necessary modifications to the law to ensure the Office can become fully operational, placing the Office within the executive branch. Thus, the Office will fulfill its purposes: representing families in child protection appeals and ensuring attorneys receive training to provide high quality representation across the state. H.F. 1862 is important to our clients and has no fiscal note.

We ask that members of the Committee vote in favor of H.F. 1862 to help indigent parents exercise their right to appeal and ensure legal representation at all stages of child protection proceedings. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to improving outcomes for children and families in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Jessica Ryan

Principal Attorney
Hennepin County Adult Representation Services