

March 15, 2021

Dear Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee:

As a Minnesota tax payer, whose hard-earned tax dollars get misused and wasted on the MN State Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Board's and GAL Program's expenses, I do **NOT** support the current budget request of the MN State GAL Board for several reasons, including the following:

The MN State GAL Board is incompetent, and does **not** have the proper knowledge nor insight to run the GAL Program with integrity.

A recent example—the GAL Board Chair, Crysta Parkin, wrote a letter to me, dated February 18, 2021, in which she demonstrated falsehood and deceit in her written statement. She stated, *“If you do not believe the program has responded properly to your request, your remedy is to make an appeal to the state court administrator in writing under Rule 9, as I stated at the conclusion of your comment at our February 16, 2021 meeting. Until such time as the state court administrator would instruct us otherwise, we have properly fulfilled your requests.”* (See attached letter by Crysta Parkin).

The problem with her statement is that she was 100% wrong. The truth is simply this—the public can **NOT** use Rule 9 of the MN Rules of Public Access to Records of the Judicial Branch whatsoever, regarding public data requests involving the GAL Program. I already knew that fact and when she sent to me her letter stating otherwise, I was shocked that she would go on the written record and make such a false claim to the public.

Therefore, I immediately challenged her letter, because it is not appropriate for the GAL Board Chair to be sending out false statements to the public which are so easily proven to be factually incorrect. To turn this into a “teachable moment,” I sent Crysta numerous emails, informing her that she was factually wrong—that the public can **NOT** contact the state court administrator (Jeff Shorba), for the purposes she stated in her letter. As proof that I was right, I also forwarded to her numerous emails from previous email communications between me and Jeff Shorba, in which we discussed this topic, two years ago. In my emails to Crysta, I asked her to respond to me, to provide clarity as to why she was making such false statements in her letter dated February 18, 2021. However, even though she saw the very words of Jeff Shorba herself contained in the emails I forwarded to her, which totally contradicted what she said in her letter to me, Crysta failed to respond to me in any way. She let her false statements be her final word.

I also sent numerous emails to Jeff Shorba, copying him on Crysta's letter and her false statements; after all, her statements involved him, since she referred to the “state court administrator.” She literally is telling the public to contact Jeff Shorba who categorically has no role whatsoever in this issue with the GAL Board.

Due to Crysta Parkin's failure to respond in any way, I wrote a letter to the MN Supreme Court Chief Justice, Lori S. Gildea, and provided a copy of Crysta's letter with it, and I informed the Chief Justice of Crysta Parkin's false statements involving the state court administrator. I received a letter from Chief Justice Lori S. Gildea, dated March 4, 2021, in which she wrote the following:

*“The GAL Board is an independent state agency and the Judicial Branch exercises no administrative control over it or the records it maintains. That means the State Court Administrator's Office **cannot** review the Guardian ad Litem Board's response to your records request.”*

The Chief Justice agreed with my understanding as well. The Chief Justice affirmed everything I had told Crysta Parkin in all of the numerous emails I had sent to Crysta. I was right and Crysta was wrong. However, to this day,

Crysta has failed to acknowledge that fact. She still has not responded back to me after she wrote her wrongful letter dated February 18, 2021. She will not take responsibility for it.

Crysta Parkin has been copied on that letter from the Chief Justice, so now Crysta can **not** continue to spread her false narrative regarding Rule 9. However, her incompetence and total failure to show respect to the public by refusing to respond when the contradiction were pointed out to her, is a reason why the GAL Board should not get their budget approved. Crysta is the Board Chair, but I also copied all of the GAL Board members on my communications with Crysta. They all knew that Crysta had made false statements on the written record. But they did nothing about it. Not one single board member told Crysta to acknowledge the truth about Rule 9, nor told Crysta to respond to my numerous emails in which I asked her to explain why she was making her false statements in her letter.

In this way, the entire GAL Board is careless, reckless, negligent, and demonstrates willful blindness to the truth. The Board is NOT sufficiently competent in its operations as a state board, and since the GAL Program's "budget is funded primarily by general fund appropriations," which is money coming from the tax dollars of hard-working Minnesota tax payers, it is a misappropriation of funds to trust them to use it the right way. They can't even get the basics right. They proved they don't even have a correct understanding about the Rules of Public Access to Records of the Judicial Branch, for which they are subjected to according to MN Statute 480.35.

On page 7 of their budget request, the GAL Board states, "*This proposal is intended to allow the Guardian ad Litem Board to continue to provide current levels of service and information to the public.*"

Is this the "*current levels of service and information to the public*" that YOU as a committee want to support? Do you want to support their kind of "service" where they hand out false "information" to the public and when proven wrong based upon the facts they fail to acknowledge the truth once again?

The tax payers deserve much better than that. That behavior from Crysta Parkin is not proper "service" nor proper "information." That kind of behavior is pathetic and unacceptable, and should not be reinforced by giving them more money. They clearly lack ability to show respect to the public. There is no excuse for that, and there won't be one, unless you look the other way and never ask them any questions about such a poor performance on their part. State programs are supposed to use money wisely, and respect the people who gave them that money. This MN State GAL Board takes the money and runs with it, never looking back to show gratitude nor responsibility toward the very people from which they took it.

The MN State GAL Board Chair, Crysta Parkin, should be fired from that role, immediately. She attempted to "pass the buck" of her responsibility to oversee fulfillment of public data requests made to the GAL Board onto the state court administrator, Jeff Shorba instead, for no valid reason whatsoever. She did so for self-serving reasons. It is her job to ensure that the public gets public data requests fulfilled as promptly as practical by the Chief Information Officer, Alex Miller, of the GAL Program. Jeff Shorba has no role in that. I know more than she does about the Rules of Public Access to Records of the Judicial Branch. I proved it.

Why doesn't Crysta Parkin tell the truth to the public?

This incompetency by Crysta Parkin, the GAL Board Chair, must be investigated fully at once.

Thank you.

Kristi Wells-Saiger
Minnesota citizen and tax payer

Board Members

Crysta Parkin, Chair
Emelie Rivera
Hon. Terrence Conkel
Patricia Moses
Sharon Chadwick
Angela Lallemond



Program Administrator

Tami Baker-Olson
25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Suite G-27
St Paul, MN 55155
651-215-9467 office
Tami.BakerOlson@courts.state.mn.us

State Guardian ad Litem Board

February 18, 2021

Ms. Kristi Wells-Saiger
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Wells-Saiger,

You have requested administrative records from the GALP under Rule 7 of the Minnesota Rules of Public Access to Records of the Judicial Branch.

Alex Miller has provided you with the requested records, but redacted financial data which is not public under Rule 5, Subd. 5: "**Security Records**. Records in the possession or custody of the courts that may substantially jeopardize the security of information, possessions, individuals, or property if subject to theft, tampering, improper use, illegal disclosure, trespass, or physical injury, such as security plans or codes, checks and checking account numbers submitted as part of a transaction with the courts."

If you do not believe the program has responded properly to your request, your remedy is to make an appeal to the state court administrator in writing under Rule 9, as I stated at the conclusion of your comment at our February 16, 2021 meeting. Until such time as the state court administrator would instruct us otherwise, we have properly fulfilled your requests.

Sincerely,

/s/ Crysta L. Parkin

Crysta L. Parkin
GAL Board Chair