



Legal Services Advocacy Project

January 30, 2023

The Honorable Jamie Becker-Finn
Chair, Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
559 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF 922 – Statewide Office of Appellate Counsel and Training

Dear Chair Becker-Finn:

Legal Aid writes to express its support for HF 922, which would establish a Statewide Office of Appellate Counsel and Training, which would create a system for providing appellate representation to parents in juvenile protection matters in state court and in Tribal court jurisdictions and offer training to attorneys practicing in this area. Enactment of this bill would improve the justice system and in particular be of great benefit to the low-income clients Legal Aid serves and represents.

As you know, today parents are appointed attorneys in CHIPs cases, but this does not extend to appeals. Most parents are financially unable to appeal their cases unless a local nonprofit agency like ours take on their case. These parents are often from low-income communities and communities of color. The creation of a Statewide Office of Appellate Counsel to provide this service to parents as the Public Defender's Office does for criminal defendants is much needed.

Thank you for introducing HF 922 and for allowing Legal Aid to communicate its support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Elwood".

Ron Elwood
Supervising Attorney
relwood@mnlsap.org
612-636-2114 (cell)