

September 20, 2021

Honorable Graham Filler, Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Re: House Bills 4847-4850

Dear Representative Filler:

As an employee who oversees a guardianship and conservatorship program, I wanted to communicate my personal and professional opposition to **House Bills 4847, 4848, 4849, and 4850**.

I'm concerned that these rushed attempts at reform, will drive more people out of the profession and put the individuals protected by these guardians and conservators at much greater risk. If professional guardians go away, who will care for the thousands of people who cannot make it on their own? There is no other safety net so why damage the only one we have available?

I cannot support these bills and urge you and your fellow lawmakers to hold them in your committee until they can be amended to something that can improve the system, not break it. Sensible reforms are surely needed, but those proposed in these bills are not the answer.

Rather than throw up additional barriers for these dedicated public servants, the Michigan Legislature should be looking at developing a long-term funding mechanism to pay them for the services they already provide.

Professional guardians are no less of a valuable part of Michigan's judicial system than court appointed lawyers. However, instead of funding them in a similar fashion the way we do indigent defense lawyers, Michigan has ignored their financial plight for decades. Now this legislative package will make their jobs even harder, without providing one cent of state funding to support their work. As many as 5,000 indigent people in Michigan have the benefit of a court-appointed guardian where the guardian literally must work for free. How do elected leaders allow that to happen?

Representative Filler, these bills are not a reasonable solution to address any problems within the system and should not be moved forward.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Brooke Gow
Executive Director