

CHIPPEWA COUNTY PROBATE COURT
HONORABLE ERIC G. BLUBAUGH



Chippewa County Courthouse
319 Court Street
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan 49783
(906) 635-6314
(Fax) 635-6852

NICOLE DUMBACK
DEPUTY PROBATE REGISTER

MICHELLE BROSCO
PROBATE REGISTER

BRIANNA JOHNSON
PROBATE CLERK

September 20, 2021

Honorable Graham Filler
Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
Post Office Box 30014
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Re: House Bills 4847-4850

Dear Chairman Filler:

As a sitting Probate Judge in Chippewa County, who counts on the services of a dwindling pool of professional--and volunteer--guardians and conservators, I wanted to communicate my personal opposition to House Bills 4847, 4848, 4849, and 4850. They leave very little discretion and workability for local judges, and place more trust in financial institutions than the good people concerned about the vulnerable population within our communities.

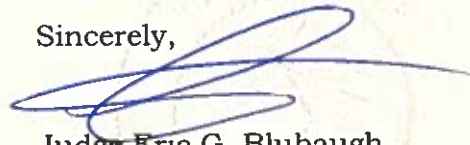
My concern is that these attempts at reform will drive more professional and volunteer guardians away from helping these people in need. This puts the vulnerable individuals protected by guardianships and conservatorships at much greater risk.

Before we throw up additional barriers for these dedicated public servants, the Michigan Legislature should look at a mechanism to pay professional fiduciaries for the services they already provide. The State of Michigan asks professional guardians to work for little or no money; in some cases, expending their own resources to serve. The State of Michigan would never think of asking their own employees to do this, and has in fact allowed many to "work from home" during the pandemic. Our guardians and conservators have not stayed home during the pandemic!

Chairman Filler, our criminal courts cannot find enough defense attorneys. And our probate courts cannot find enough guardians and conservators. Please hold these bills in your committee until a more comprehensive and workable solution can be found that also provides the funding needed to ensure safety and security for our vulnerable population.

Thank you for your kind attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Judge Eric G. Blubaugh
Chippewa County Probate Court

cc. Representative John N. Damoose