

TO: Chair Schultz and Rep. Hollins
FROM: Joanna Woolman and Hannah Burton
SUBJECT: HF 3159 (Permanency disposition law purpose)
DATE: April 8th, 2022

Rep. Hollins (HF3159): Permanency disposition law purpose modified when child cannot be placed with parents, and permanency dispositions modified when child cannot return home.

Chair Schultz

The Mitchell Hamline Institute to Transform Child Protection would like to thank you for including HF3159 in the Human Services Finance and Policy Omnibus Bill. We have been working with stakeholders, community members, county attorneys, and DHS to find common ground on this important legislation.

This policy will eliminate Minnesota's explicit statutory preference for terminating parental rights in permanency dispositions, and instead, states that this decision should be based on the best interests of the child according to their unique needs and circumstances. Importantly, the bill follows widely accepted best practices by stating a preference for placing children with relatives and kin before considering options with nonrelatives.

By removing this statutory preference for terminations of parental rights and making alternative permanency options more accessible, we can help more children exit foster care to permanent families while preserving important relationships and connections to the child's family and community.

Again, we would like to thank you for the inclusion of this provision and appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Joan Woolman Executive Director, Institute to Transform Child Protection
Hannah Burton Law student with the Institute to Transform Child Protection