Hello Sue and Gabrielle,

I had hoped to come up to the State House tomorrow morning, Friday January 5, to attend the hearing on H.307 bill which you have co-sponsored.  Given weather and travel predictions, I may not make the trip.

In case that's what happens, I want to thank you for excellent, caring followthrough on this issue.  While recent revisions to the Guardianship Statute brought needed improvements, the issue addressed in this bill - of responsibility for demonstrating adequacy to end a kinship guardianship - is important.  And the Statute as it stands gets it wrong, with consequences that run counter to the intent (and complexity) of kinship care.

So I hope that the advocacy you will hear is convincing to the committee members: biological parents whose child or children are in the care of kin should have the responsibility to demonstrate that they are able to resume the care of their children. Having that burden placed with kinship caregivers often places grandparents (or other close family members) in the position of passing negative judgment on their own adult children or close relatives.  This isn't beneficial for relationship building, or rebuilding, within the kinship system. And it is particularly harmful for minor children whose loyalty conflicts are exacerbated by such judgments.  In the years ahead, these children will have a lot to figure out under the best of

circumstances. It can be useful for them to learn that their biological parents wanted to provide care for them; it can be destructive for them to learn that the barrier to reunification is created by the kinship caregivers they need to trust.

The changes you propose of just a few words in the existing statute will make a large difference in the dynamic of kinship care as a way to preserve family relationships.

Thank you!

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