



MINNESOTA  
CHILDREN'S  
ALLIANCE



VIOLENCE FREE  
MINNESOTA  
THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE



March 30, 2022

Members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Finance Safety Committee  
*Via Electronic Delivery*

Re: DE Amendment to S.F. 2673 - Need for Funding for Crime Victim Services in Minnesota

Dear Members of the Committee,

In collaboration, Minnesota's 6 crime victim coalitions request an ongoing annual increase in base funding to crime victim services, so crime victims can access the services and supports they need to care for themselves and their children. We are supporting the Governor's proposed budget increase for the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) of \$12.5 million for fiscal year 2023 and \$17.5 million of base level increase for fiscal years 2024/2025. Together, Violence Free Minnesota, the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition, the Minnesota Alliance on Crime, Mending the Sacred Hoop Coalition, and the Minnesota Children's Alliance represent over 200 programs and individuals providing services and advocacy to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and general crime across the state of Minnesota. Crime victim services have not received an increase in base level state funding in over 7 years.

Programs need additional and sustained government funding in order to provide critical public safety services to victims of crime. As has been noted in this committee, the state and nation is experiencing a rise in crime, and our advocacy programs report record numbers of people reaching out for services; and those who reach out to services are reporting more severe violence, complex family needs, and increased mental health issues. The pandemic has only exacerbated the situation, as need has grown and funding gaps expanded.

In order to meet the demands of this moment, our elected officials must invest in community-based advocacy services for victim/survivors of crime. This funding would help fill the direct needs of programs and victim/survivors by providing direct client assistance to victims, legal advocacy, competitive wages for direct service staff, hotel stays, culturally responsive programming, crime prevention programming, and more.

Crime victim service providers have a direct and immediate impact on the public safety of Minnesotans. We are urging your support for an increase in base funding for crime victim services that will sustain and expand these critical public safety operations as proposed for the



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OJP. Your continued commitment to prioritize the safety of victim/survivors, their children, and communities across Minnesota is critical.

Sincerely,

Guadalupe Lopez  
Executive Director  
Violence Free Minnesota

Artika Roller  
Executive Director  
MN Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Bobbi Holtberg  
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MN Alliance on Crime

Nicole Matthews  
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Marcia Milliken  
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