

**February 7, 2023**

Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives

*Via electronic delivery*

**Re: Letter in Support of the Restore the Vote Act, H.F. 28/S.F. 26**

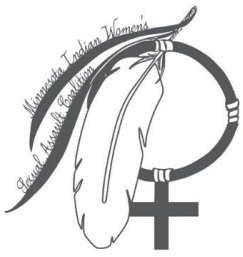
Dear Members of the Committee:

The Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition (MIWSAC), the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA), Violence Free Minnesota (VFMN) and the Minnesota Alliance on Crime (MAC), in community submit this letter to express our support for the Restore the Vote Act - HF 28/SF 26. Our coalitions represent over 200 programs serving more than 68,000 victims/survivors of violence annually across the state. We advocate on behalf of our member organizations and individuals to lift the voices of victims/survivors at the legislature and beyond.

There has been a lot of conversation about what victims/survivors want. We can tell you that they have shared that the current legal system does not center their needs or prevent future harm. They are asking critical questions about what supports and interventions truly lead to safer communities. Many victims/survivors of violence want to disrupt the ongoing cycle of harm, punishment, and isolation. They want sustainable initiatives that will help build safer communities and prevent harm from happening again. They want funding for community services, safe housing, food, childcare, and avenues for healing.

This legislation can help prevent future violence. The support and community engagement folks experience upon release is critical in determining whether or not they are likely to reoffend. When people engage in civic responsibilities such as voting, they can become more connected to their communities and establish the strong supports shown to impact recidivism rates.

A large percentage of incarcerated people are themselves victims/survivors of violence. We know that many people also experience violence while in confinement.



By obstructing formerly incarcerated people’s right to vote, we effectively silence these victims/survivors, preventing them from fully participating in community.

All victims/survivors—including formerly incarcerated survivors—deserve to use their voices freely at the ballot box. Vote yes on the Restore the Vote Act to restore their rights and support all victims/survivors by investing in stronger, safer communities.

In Community,

**Nicole Matthews**  
Executive Director, MIWSAC

**Artika Roller**  
Executive Director, MNCASA

**Guadalupe Lopez**  
Executive Director, VFMN

**Bobbi Holtberg**  
Executive Director, MAC