

March 8, 2023

Senator Steve Cwodzinski
3207 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Cwodzinski,

My name is Mohamoud Hassan and I am writing in support of your legislation - SF 2239 – a bill to add a fifth major to the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office who will oversee Community Relations.

I have lived in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis for 20 years. Before then, I came from Somalia. In Somalia, we had to fear law enforcement. In America, I have found that law enforcement is here to serve the people. Around 10 years ago, I worked with community leaders to recruit some of the first Somali police officers into the Minneapolis Police Department. We felt that law enforcement officers from our community would be able to better serve us.

When the legislation was written in 1967 to allow four majors in Hennepin County, the Somali population in Minnesota was close to 0. Since then, it has increased to around 75,000. The majority of us live in and around Hennepin County. Adding a major who can focus on community outreach will be another step toward building trust in the Somali community. A number of community leaders and I have worked with Abdi Mohamed who is currently part of the Hennepin County Community Outreach team. Sheriff Witt has made it a priority to connect with our community personally as well.

I strongly support the expansion of community outreach from law enforcement. Our community has faced serious public safety challenges that have gotten much worse in the past 3 years. We need the police and we need them to build relationships in our community so that we are comfortable calling them.

Thank you for your leadership for this legislation to allow Hennepin County to hire a fifth Major to oversee Community Relations.

Mohamoud Hassan
Cedar Riverside
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