



MINNESOTA POLICE AND PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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February 21, 2023

To: Senator Eric Pratt

RE: Support of SF646 (Pratt), Grant Funding Appropriation to Provide Equine Therapy to First Responders Suffering from Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

The Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association (MPPOA) is the largest association representing public safety professionals in the State of Minnesota. We represent Minnesota's 10,000+ public safety officials who hold active law enforcement licenses

MPPOA supports SF646, legislation that will provide funding to Abijah's on the Backside to provide equine experiential mental health therapy to first responders suffering from job-related trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder.

While an unlikely pairing, this legislation brings together off-track thoroughbreds and first responders suffering mental health issues and gives both a second chance. Horses that have run their last race can have a second career providing much needed therapy to first responders suffering from addiction, depression, substance abuse, anxiety, and other mental health challenges.

This is a first of its kind program, spearheaded by Canterbury Park, and gives sustainability to the racehorse industry and importantly, provides an additional outlet for mental health services to those Minnesotans who have served their communities on the frontlines. We urge the Legislature to prioritize funding for equine experiential mental health therapy and hope it serves as a model for the future expansion of similar programs in our region and across the country.

Sincerely,

Brian Peters
Executive Director
Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association



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