



March 3, 2023

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

Re: Letter in Support of Senate Files 1883, 1889, and 1890

Dear Members of the Committee:

The Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA) submits this letter to express our support for Senate Files 1883, 1889, and 1890. MNCASA is a statewide membership coalition driving transformative culture change to address sexual violence through advocacy, prevention, racial justice, and systems change. MNCASA acts as a collective voice of organizations and individuals committed to ending sexual violence.

MNCASA supports the policy bills proposed by the Office of Justice Programs, which are designed to correct and clarify existing statute. They strive to ensure that our laws designed to serve victims/survivors of sexual assault and other violent crimes are actually effective and are not causing further harm. Victims/survivors have already experienced significant trauma, and for our legal system to exacerbate this trauma is unacceptable. These bills are one step in improving outcomes for victims of sexual violence in Minnesota.

SF 1890 proposes several technical fixes that correct outdated and inconsistent statutory language. These fixes will help to ensure consistency and uniformity in our laws, and mitigate any potential confusion or contradiction caused by previous reorganization.

SF 1883 will ensure prosecutors are clear on their responsibilities to notify victims of sentencing and plea hearings, and shifts responsibility for notification from courts to prosecutors. This bill will improve communication between the criminal legal system and victims/survivors, allowing for more consistent and timely notification. Victims of sexual violence have a right to be informed of updates in their case, and too often this critical information is not communicated.

MNCASA also supports SF 1889, which makes improvements to the crime victim reparations program. Changing the name from “reparations” to “reimbursement” not only better describes the function of the program, but also removes the stigma often associated with the term “reparations.” In addition, it allows for a broader opportunity to demonstrate cooperation with law enforcement. Instead of relying only on law enforcement to establish cooperation, victims/survivors will be able to provide corroboration from other professionals familiar with their case. This increases victim eligibility for the program, and allows for a nuanced understanding of what cooperation with law enforcement entails. Third, it prohibits a determination of “contributory misconduct” based on a

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person's current or past affiliation with a particular group. Victims of sexual violence and other crimes should be eligible for reimbursement regardless of associations or affiliations.

The Office of Justice Programs provides support to victims/survivors of sexual assault and other violent crimes, and these statutory changes will improve their ability to serve more victims more effectively. MNCASA respectfully requests your support of Senate Files 1883, 1889, and 1890.

In Community,

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