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To: Chair Ron Latz and Members of the Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

From: Chris Steward, Heroes Helping Heroes

Re: SF928 (Frentz/Jasinski) Heroes Helping Heroes Appropriation

Thank you for hearing SF928. We appreciate the support of Senators Frentz and Jasinski regarding this important bill.

My name is Chris Steward, and I am the founder of Heroes Helping Heroes, a Minnesota 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our mission is to provide peer support to law enforcement officers and first responders who have experienced traumatic events and are facing employment-related mental health issues as a result.

The comradery and bond that the injured participants of this program establish is truly amazing. Not only will this experience enable many law enforcement and first responders to return to work, it has also undoubtedly saved lives.

With your support and the support of this Committee for this funding, we can continue to grow and help even more first responders across the state. Not only will this allow us to have a positive impact on the lives of our first responders, but also the lives of their families and the communities in which they are a part of and serve.

At a time where staffing shortage is at or near an all-time low for most departments, it is more important now than ever to help our brave men and women get the help they so desperately need and deserve. The help they will receive from Heroes Helping Heroes will allow them to continue to do a profession they love and to continue to serve communities across the state who are seeing violent crime at an unprecedented level.

To help get this out-of-control crime back under control, we need law enforcement professionals to be mentally fit and able to tackle this problem head on. This is why I am respectfully asking for the support of not only this committee but the support of the entire Senate to approve funding for Heroes Helping Heroes.

Thank you.