



Office of the  
**DAKOTA COUNTY SHERIFF**

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**JOE LEKO, SHERIFF**  
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1580 Highway 55  
Hastings, MN 55033

February 27, 2023

Representative Kelly Moller  
509 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Moller,

As the Dakota County Sheriff, I am writing to urge your support for HF1415, a bill authored by Rep. Curran to provide training for counselors to better serve law enforcement officers in distress. I believe that the more we support public safety professionals in their health and well-being, the better they will be able to develop coping strategies and handle critical incidents with greater success.

Police departments around the country are seeing the growing need to support mental health and wellness of police officers, to improve officer recruitment and retention, and to promote better public safety outcomes. Studies focused on the efficacy of mental health and wellness programs identify trust as a major determinant of whether officers engage in wellness and mental health services.

Most mental health and wellness resources available to police officers lack understanding of the cultural and behavioral landscape of law enforcement, which limits their ability to provide quality services to this population. Receiving help from specially trained counselors will make them less likely to resign, develop PTSD, and/or have suicidal thoughts and will reduce family dysfunction.

Thank you for your consideration,

Joe Leko  
Dakota County Sheriff