



February 14, 2024

Chair Latz and Judiciary and Public Safety committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.F. 3447, a bill to increase annual funding to crime victim service providers by \$20 million. Missions Inc. Programs is a social service agency located in Plymouth that provides housing and supportive services to individuals recovering from substance use disorder and/or experiencing domestic violence. Last year we provided emergency shelter to over 370 women and children fleeing domestic violence and legal advocacy services to over 700 survivors living in the community. During that time, we received 1,021 requests for shelter that we were unable to meet due to capacity. Each of these denials weighs heavily on our staff's hearts, as it sometimes means the caller stays in an unsafe situation for at least another night, despite our referrals to other shelters.

Alongside other agencies across Minnesota, we work tirelessly to protect victims and their children from ongoing threats, physical and sexual violence, and unimaginable emotional abuse within their own homes. While we are a cornerstone of public safety, supporting some of the most vulnerable in our communities, our resources have been stretched thin, making it increasingly difficult to meet the demand for our services. The recent funding put out by the Minnesota Legislature, once again, fell short of the request and the actual need.

Throughout Minnesota, domestic violence programs have not received an increase in our state funding for over nine years. In that time, we have faced unprecedented challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic; grappled with increasingly complex cases where survivors faced the compounding barriers of homelessness, substance use, and mental illness; and experienced the rising costs of providing safety and support to hundreds of survivors each year.

Across our coalition of domestic violence service providers, agencies are struggling to meet the escalating needs of survivors and retain staff by paying a competitive wage. At least one shelter program has already closed and more will likely follow if state funding remains stagnant.

Please help support victims of domestic violence in our community by voting yes on S.F. 3447. Without this funding, many survivors in Minnesota will be unable to access lifesaving services – we cannot allow that to happen. Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill.

Warm regards,

Katy Daniels, CEO
Missions Inc. Programs
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