



MINNESOTA CHAPTER

Senator Ron Latz, Chair
Judiciary and Public Safety
February 14, 2024

Chair Latz and Judiciary and Public Safety Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW-MN), we are writing in support of SF3447, a bill that provides funding to direct service programs for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and general crime. Minnesota's six crime victim services coalitions (Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition, the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Violence Free Minnesota, the Minnesota Alliance on Crime, the Minnesota Children's Alliance, and Mending the Sacred Hoop) are jointly requesting an increase of \$20 million per year to fund services such as emergency shelter, crisis response, legal advocacy, safety planning, victim support, community education, and violence prevention. NASW-MN joins these organizations in asking the state to adequately fund these crucial services.

NASW-MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing about 2000 social workers. Our members work in a wide variety of settings, including direct practice (clinical and non-clinical) and macro practice. While the populations served by social workers vary greatly, they are all impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and other crimes. In particular, the issues addressed by social workers – poverty, addiction, mental health, disabilities, homelessness, etc. – can both exacerbate and be exacerbated by these crimes.

We therefore ask that you support SF3447 to provide much-needed funding to crime victim service programs across Minnesota. Social workers recognize the interdependence of social services and know that if the crime victim services funded by this bill are unavailable, many of the most vulnerable people in our community will suffer. Crime victim services are vital to our public safety infrastructure and are uniquely devoted to the physical and emotional safety of victims. The difficult and highly skilled work done by victim advocates deserves to be valued and funded adequately.

We appreciate your service and work on this important issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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