



Minnesota Freedom Fund Action

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March 21, 2024

To: Minnesota Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

Subject: SF 3222 Bail Data Transparency

Dear Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

On behalf of Minnesota Freedom Fund, we are asking that you support SF 3222 which would require the State Court Administration collect pre-trial data, and the Sentencing Guidelines Commission to analyze, report and publicly share the data.

Minnesota Freedom Fund is a nonprofit organization that posts bail and immigration bonds for those that can't afford it. We have posted over \$20 million in bail and bond since 2020 for Minnesotans and immigrants around the country.

We know firsthand the harms of pre-trial detention. We know that when a person is released before their trial, they are more likely to have better outcomes in their case, are less likely to lose their jobs, housing, and family connections, and are less likely to be arrested again later.

We also know from limited existent data that cash bail is a significant cost burden to already marginalized communities, and that each year tens of thousands of Minnesotans are forced to pay thousands of dollars to secure their release, often requiring families to forego other basic costs and necessities. For many people, if they pay a for-profit bail bond company, they will never get that money back, even if charges are dropped or the defendant is found not guilty.

The Minnesota Justice Research Center (MNJRC) has recently issued a report (*Pre-Trial Best Practices Preliminary Report*), that confirmed what we at Minnesota Freedom Fund already know: the first step in creating a more fair and just cash bail system is to better understand the status quo. In their report, MNJRC notes how critical it is that comprehensive data be collected and shared publicly. SF 3222, which mandates pre-trial transparency, would implement that recommendation.

Minnesota's pretrial system should not be allowed to operate in the dark. I urge you to support the passage of SF 3222 for pre-trial data transparency in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

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