



March 21, 2024
Via Email Delivery

Re: Letter in Support of SF 4245

Chair Latz and members of the Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

The Center for Policing Equity (CPE) thanks you for the opportunity to submit this letter in support of SF 4245. As a research and action organization committed to using data to identify and reduce the causes of racial disparities in public safety, we have seen firsthand the power of strong data collection to improve policing and public safety. CPE has worked with dozens of law enforcement agencies nationwide who seek our assistance to improve their data collection practices because they know data can help them pinpoint the core issues driving inequity and assess the effectiveness of their policies and practices. Currently, 25 states and Washington, D.C. have a data collection requirement for documenting police stops. Without statewide standards, law enforcement agencies are left with the burden of determining their own protocols for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data which frequently leads to incomplete or unanalyzable data.

Because many departments nationwide have taken initiative in the past decade to modernize their data collection practices from paper to electronic records—the same as in other industries—officers frequently already record many data points on stops. The proposed data standards should not represent a huge burden or change for most departments. In fact, through conversions with stakeholders we have heard that officers in Connecticut spend less than 30 seconds recording each stop.

We have seen the positive impacts of data collection across the country¹ and right here in Minnesota. When the St. Paul Police Department found that Black drivers were more than four times more likely to be stopped for non-safety related infractions, they changed their policies and practices to reduce non-safety related stops, with impressive results.² Equipment violation stops of Black drivers dropped notably, improving racial disparities with no changes to firearm seizures.³ Data collection not only alerted the department to disparities, but also enabled them to make evidence-based policy changes and assess the effectiveness of those changes.

SF 4245 would help ensure that the right data are collected, empowering law enforcement agencies, lawmakers, and community members to identify factors driving racial disparities and make evidence-based decisions regarding public safety.

We urge you to support SF 4245 and contribute to a more transparent, accountable, and equitable policing environment in Minnesota.

¹ Ross, M. B., Kalinowski, J. J., & Barone, K. (2020). Testing for disparities in traffic stops: Best practices from the Connecticut model. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 19(4), 1289–1303. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12528>

² Rory Pulvino, R., Sorensen, J., Naddeo, JJ., & Fishman, J. (2023, June 7) Traffic stop policy in Ramsey County, MN. Justice Innovation Lab. <https://knowledgehub.justiceinnovationlab.org/reports/traffic-stop-policy-ramsey-county>

³ *Id.*