



MINNESOTA STATE

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March 18, 2024

TO: Members of the Minnesota Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for S.F. 4269

Dear Chair Latz and Committee Members,

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of Minnesota State. S.F. 4269 has the potential to have a significant positive impact on students attending institutions within Minnesota State.

Regarding Section 1: Consideration of Criminal Records Limited. The system agrees that a clear definition of “violent felony or sexual assault” would be beneficial and that conditional admissions decisions can be made without a requirement to disclose a prospective applicant’s criminal record.

Regarding Section 3: Prison Education Partnerships. Minnesota State has been at the forefront of Prison Education for many years. The 2015 Obama Administration Second Chance Pell Pilot allowed for incarcerated people to access federal Pell grants for the first time since the passing of the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act.

During the pilot, all institutions in the state of Minnesota that were granted pilot status were institutions within Minnesota State, emphasizing our commitment to prison education. Currently, there are nearly 500 students enrolled in prison education programs offered through Metropolitan State University, Minneapolis College, Minnesota State University, Mankato, North Hennepin Community College, and South Central College. Our institutions have been working in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Corrections to provide this important opportunity to students within DOC facilities; with institutions often accessing institutional and foundation funds to ensure students are able to enroll in programs without regard to financial barriers. Minnesota State is committed to this work, expanding the number of programs offered, and is in alignment with the Department of Correction’s goal to have 1,000 students in prison education programs by 2027.

Regarding Section 4: Supervised Release Employment Requirement; Postsecondary Education. We agree that in a case where a student is placed on supervised release and required to be employed, that enrollment in a postsecondary education program may satisfy that

requirement. In addition to students having defined course plans within these programs, our current prison education program institutions are implementing initiatives on their campuses that help support students as they transition from their facilities to taking courses on campus. We believe that the support offered alongside a student's coursework will enable them to be successful in their future careers.

Minnesota State is committed to widening access to postsecondary education for those experiencing incarceration and will continue to implement strategies to eradicate barriers for incarcerated student success.

Sincerely,

Krystle Igbo-Ogbonna
Director, Student Access and Academic Partnership Initiatives
Minnesota State