

26 March 2024

## **Letter of Support on SF 4269**

### **To Whom It May Concern:**

SOS Sexual Violence Services of Saint Paul - Ramsey County Colleges and Universities Committee submits this letter to express support on SF 4269. The Ramsey County Colleges and Universities Committee meets monthly to address protocols and policies that impact victim/survivors of sexual misconduct on campus. SOS Sexual Violence Services, is a rape crisis agency in Ramsey County that provides free and confidential trauma informed and victim centered resources, information, and services to victim/survivors of sexual violence.

The objective and hope is this bill will address the historical and criminal legal system bias against Black, Latino, Indigenous, and people of colour that have had a disproportionate impact on their post-secondary education and thus employment. It will also address the national issue and state issue that continues to impact Black, Latino, Indigenous, and students of colour: the school to prison pipeline. I want to emphasize the following, “while screening of prospective college applicants for criminal records may appear to be race neutral, the racial disparities in the criminal justice system means this practice has the potential of having significant racially exclusionary effects (The Use of Criminal History Records in College Admissions, Pg. 25).”

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed bill which aims to prohibit colleges and universities from considering certain criminal records during the application process. This bill is a crucial step towards ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals seeking higher education, and allows post secondary education participation to satisfy employment requirements for those on supervised release from prison.

In addition to promoting fairness and safety on college campuses, this bill also aligns with broader goals of promoting rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. By removing barriers to education for individuals with criminal records, we can help to break the cycle of crime and create pathways to success for those who are seeking to turn their lives around.

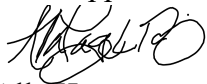
In support of the bill, I advocate for the following provisions to protect victim/survivors of sexual assault

- Only allow institutions to ask about the most serious felony convictions (as defined in subdivision 2 of the bill (lines 1.16-1.19).
- Provide on campus support services for students impacted by sexual misconduct/violence
- Provide on campus support services for students who have criminal records

This bill sends a clear message that educational institutions have a responsibility to support and prioritize the well-being of all students, including survivors of sexual violence.

Lastly, this bill reflects commitment to justice, equality, and compassion within the higher education system. Together, we can ensure that our colleges and universities are places of opportunity, fairness, and safety for all.

Much appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alla Hassan', written in a cursive style.

Alla Hassan

Ramsey County Sexual Assault Protocol Team Coordinator

SOS Sexual Violence Services

651-247-2887