



Office of the Commissioner

445 Minnesota Street • Suite 1000 • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-5100

Phone: 651.201.7160 • Fax: 651.297.5728 • TTY: 651.282.6555

www.dps.mn.gov

April 23, 2025

Chair Marty and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate File 1417 (SF1417). The Department of Public Safety (DPS) works to serve all communities to build a safer Minnesota. I want to thank Chair Latz and the work of the Judiciary and Public Safety Committee in the midst of a challenging budget outlook facing Minnesota. While I recognize the legislature must take steps to address the future budget issues, I am concerned that that lack of funding for DPS in this bill will have a negative impact on public safety across Minnesota.

This bill recommends a significantly lower DPS operating adjustment than the Governor's request of \$5.785 million for FY 26-27. The measured operating adjustment recommended by the Governor would assist DPS in addressing cost pressures while still requiring us to make strategic decisions to ensure minimal impacts to the public safety work of our divisions. SF 1417 only provides \$2.604 million in FY 26-27.

The operating adjustments in this bill for Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement (AGE) will require divisions to limit hiring and filling of vacant positions, including cutting the number of peace officers hired. There will be real impacts in the ability to respond and investigate illegal gambling and alcohol-related complaints.

This budget does not adequately fund the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's (BCA) needs for its ongoing increased costs in the proposed operating adjustment. The impact would be significant for the BCA and would make it difficult continue delivery of its core public safety services Minnesotans expect. There BCA lab will experience significant increases in forensic testing backlogs, turnaround times, and reduction in advancements in technology critical for improve case outcomes.

The BCA will have to cut law enforcement agents and analysts focused on violent crime, illicit gun trafficking, online sexual exploitation of children, behavior threat teams who disrupt mass violence attacks, our force investigations unit, focus on fentanyl trafficking. The BCA would have to cut analysts who analyze threats to our schools, faith-based institutions and disrupting terrorism. This all comes as federal law enforcement has adjusted their priorities and additional workload will be placed on the BCA to fill these gaps in support of our communities across Minnesota.

Alcohol
and Gambling
Enforcement

Bureau of
Criminal
Apprehension

Driver
and Vehicle
Services

Emergency
Communication
Networks

Homeland
Security and
Emergency
Management

Minnesota
State Patrol

Office of
Communications

Office of
Justice Programs

Office of
Pipeline Safety

Office of
Traffic Safety

State Fire
Marshal

The BCA would not be able to ensure the security of our systems and networks, the ability to meet FBI CJIS Security Policy requirements for BCA system and data security. This all comes at a time with significant uncertainty, as cuts are now being announced, in various federal funding programs as well through various grant programs that allow the BCA to maintain its core services.

With the lack of operating funding provided for Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM), we will not have the needed funding to move into and operate the new Statewide Emergency Operations Center. This is at a time when federal funding for vital programs, including emergency preparedness and disaster response are being cut and responsibilities are being pushed to the state without additional funding. The minimal operating adjustments included will impact our ability to prepare for and respond to disasters and emergencies in Minnesota. I urge this committee to fully fund the modest operating adjustment recommended by the Governor.

I am concerned that this bill does not contain the Governor's recommendation to allow DPS to utilize up to five percent of grant appropriations to administer noncompetitive grants and up to ten percent to administer competitive grants. Providing DPS funding for these administrative costs is vital to ensuring adequate resources for critical oversight functions for grants such as monitoring grantees and programs to ensure compliance with requirements, ensuring timely financial and progress reporting, and ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements. These functions require adequate staffing and resources and are a critical component to prevent fraud or mismanagement, as well as ensuring grant dollars serve their intended purposes.

Of further concern in this bill is the inclusion of a requirement for all law enforcement to register for the Etrace system and report on recovered or confiscated firearms without the necessary funding to BCA. BCA operates the statewide National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) and the requirement in this bill is expected to triple the demand on this unit. We do not have concern about the underlying policy goal, however, without funding for staffing to handle the increased submissions, BCA expects to see turnaround time for processing these submissions double. Including new requirements without adequate funding, especially given the limited operating adjustments, will have a detrimental impact to violent crime response.

I appreciate the inclusion of the statutory language to solidify the transfers from the Department of Commerce Fraud Unit to the DPS Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) State Fraud and Financial Crimes Section, but the failure to include additional resources for a forensic accountant and to account for increased criminal prosecution will hamper these efforts. These additional resources for the Fraud and Financial Crime Section would bolster efforts to identify, disrupt, and hold those accountable who prey upon state programs designed to assist Minnesotans in need. I hope this committee will reconsider including this additional funding. Relatedly, I am appreciative that SF 1417 includes the Governor's proposal to increase criminal penalties for theft of public funds.

I am thankful for the inclusion of funding crime victim services but would like to see this funding increased to the governor's recommended levels. The level of funding for these vital services provided by the federal government has been dropping significantly and Minnesota has stepped up to assist with the gap. With more uncertainty with federal funds than ever before, this bill ensures that funding will partially continue and help fund service providers for another year. DPS is also supportive of the creation of a special revenue account for dedicated crime victim services funding. Because this approach differs from the Governor's public safety budget, we will need to ensure that the details of a new special revenue account are fully reviewed to avoid any unexpected challenges. I look forward to continuing to explore potential long-term stable funding sources for this vital public safety work.

It is disappointing this bill does not contain funding to allow the continuation of the successful and popular Intensive Comprehensive Peace Officer Education and Training Grant program. This program would assist Minnesota law enforcement agencies with hiring and the additional funding recommended by the Governor could fund approximately 75 additional peace officers in local communities, contributing to public safety across Minnesota. I support the inclusion of training funding provided to the POST board that will support law enforcement statewide but would like to see the amount increased to match the Governor's recommendation.

The increased appropriation for state emergency response teams, including Urban Search and Rescue, Air Rescue, and hazardous materials response teams, enhances oversight and preparedness by supporting training, maintaining capabilities, and replacing aging equipment. Additionally, the DPS proposal to raise fire inspection fees for charter schools ensures all public schools pay a uniform rate, covering inspection costs and reinforcing safety measures to protect school children. We are supportive of and appreciate the appropriation of funds from the 911 Emergency Fund to Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) to address necessary capital improvements and operating expenses for the continued essential operations of the critical public safety ARMER communication system.

I am also grateful to see the changes to the Line of Duty Death program included in this bill. These changes will provide clarity to the statute and expand eligibility to cover part-time fire fighters. Thank you for the extensions included in the appropriations for this program to ensure that DPS has the funding needed to account for these changes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill. I want to recognize all the work of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee and Chair Latz for their support of Public Safety. I am hopeful that they will reconsider the operating adjustment amounts for DPS and fully fund the agency and avoid the negative impacts to violent crime investigations, turnaround times, and disaster preparedness that would result from the current funding levels. I look forward to continued partnership to uplift the hardworking professionals who have chosen careers in public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Jacobson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bob" being more prominent than the last name "Jacobson".

Bob Jacobson
Commissioner, Department of Public Safety