



Dear Chair Latz and Members of the Committee,

Violence Free Minnesota (the coalition against relationship abuse), the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and the Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition write jointly in support of SF 662. At its most fundamental level, stealthing is a violation of bodily autonomy. When non-consensual condom removal occurs, the victim of the act is robbed of the ability to make informed decisions about their own body. From this basic intrusion onto the principle of bodily autonomy, stealthing acts as a form of sexual violence, relationship abuse, and reproductive coercion.

Stealthing is a form of sexual assault, and it is a factor in other forms of sexual violence.<sup>1</sup> When people consent to protected sex, one person does not get to non-consensually convert that into unprotected sex. Unprotected sex carries with it several risks which protected sex does not, including but not limited to an increased risk of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. Research shows that stealthing results in higher incidence of sexually transmitted infections for both partners, and that being a victim of stealthing is associated with various negative mental and physical health outcomes.<sup>2</sup> Stealthing violates consent, harms both partners, and has an especially negative impact on victims. Because of this known impact, stealthing is understood to be a violent act of manipulation and control over another person.

Stealthing can also be a form of domestic violence and reproductive coercion. According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, at least 25% of people who contacted the Hotline in 2011 reported reproductive coercion.<sup>3</sup> By nonconsensually increasing the chances of a pregnancy, stealthing is a key component of reproductive coercion. Pregnancy can be an especially dangerous time for victims of domestic violence, and getting someone pregnant by force or trickery is a tactic which domestic abusers use to maintain power and control over victims.<sup>4</sup>

The stigma surrounding sexually transmitted infections can contribute to the isolation of the victim, enabling further power and control by the abusive partner.<sup>5</sup> Isolation is one of the most common tactics employed by abusive partners.<sup>6</sup> The intentional infliction of a sexually transmitted disease through stealthing harms the victim not only by giving them an infection, but also by potentially isolating them from peer support due to stigma.

This bill would enable victims of these harms to have some legal recourse when exposed to these dangers. It also explicitly names stealthing as an illegal practice, ensuring that there can be no confusion as to whether or not the practice is legal or permissible. We support this bill, and we ask this committee to support it as well.

Thank you,

Guadalupe Lopez  
Executive Director  
Violence Free Minnesota

Kenosha Alexander  
Board Chair  
Minnesota Coalition  
Against Sexual Assault

Nicole Matthews  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Indian Women's  
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<sup>1</sup> [Stealthing | National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)

<sup>2</sup> ['Stealthing': A Silent Threat to Sexual and Reproductive Health by King David Dzirasah :: SSRN](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Intimate Partner Violence Endangers Pregnant People and Their Infants | National Partnership for Women & Families](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Reproductive and Sexual Coercion | ACOG](#)

<sup>5</sup> [The role of sexually transmitted infections \(STI\) prevention and control programs in reducing gender, sexual and STI-related stigma - PMC](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Suffering Alone: The Impacts of Isolation on the Mental Well-Being of Victims and Survivors of Relationship Violence - Human Options](#)