

BRIAN MUELLER
CHIEF OF POLICE



NATHAN MEREDITH
CAPTAIN

HUNTER JULIEN
CAPTAIN

February 14th, 2025

To: Members of the Minnesota House & Senate

Subject: Urgent Support for Funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO)

Dear Minnesota Legislators,

I am writing to strongly urge your support for funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO), an organization dedicated to providing outdoor-based mental health programs for military personnel, veterans, and first responders in Minnesota. HHO has profoundly impacted the lives of those who have served our country and communities by offering meaningful outdoor experiences that promote healing, connection, and well-being.

As someone who supports veteran/first responder mental health efforts, I have witnessed the life-changing impact these outdoor experiences have on participants. These programs provide more than just recreational opportunities—they offer healing, connection, and renewed purpose.

The mental health crisis among veterans, law enforcement, firefighters, and EMS personnel is well-documented. Programs like HHO address this crisis in a proven and effective way:

- 73.8% of participants report "Excellent" mental health after their outdoor adventure.
- 75.4% experience a significant reduction in stress.
- 91.8% rate their experience as "Excellent."

While HHO has been successful in securing funding through private sources, legislative support would allow them to serve even more Minnesotans, ensuring more of our heroes receive the benefits of these programs. This investment is not just about supporting those who serve—it's also about strengthening Minnesota's economy. Funding these initiatives means tax dollars go back into our state, supporting local businesses, outfitters, guides, mental health professionals and rural communities that benefit directly from these outdoor activities.

I respectfully urge you to advocate for and approve funding for these critical programs. Our heroes have given everything for us—it's time we stand up and support them in return.

Thank you for your time and dedication to Minnesota's veterans, first responders, and military personnel. I appreciate your leadership and commitment to their well-being.

Sincerely,

Brian Mueller
Chief of Police, City of Stillwater
bmueller@stillwatermn.gov
651-351-4906

February 9, 2025

To whom it may concern;

Outside of youth sports, I've never worn a uniform. A uniform to serve this country or our communities. For about 20 years I wore a suit in corporate America. Just a few years ago I left to care for a sick child (who is now thriving) and never looked back. With the support of my incredible wife, I took the path of small business ownership and am still grinding away to live that dream. From the beginning of this phase of my life, one of the many pleasures of being my own boss is the opportunity to choose where the funds go when there is any extra. Certainly, it starts with bills and the bank and taxes. After that we hope that there is enough left to help fuel good work somewhere.

As that decision point came upon us, we were blessed to meet Chris Tetrault and the Hometown Hero Outdoors organization. They were coming into their own about the same time my journey as a business owner was doing the same. A few of those extra dollars needed a home and it was quickly that I realized HHO was going to be a part of that.

My body and mind were spared the damage of war or service. However, the damage of war didn't spare my family. My grandfather, Lyle Frolund served in World War 2. He returned to Fargo, ND where it was apparent his body was largely unharmed, but his mind was not. My mother shared stories about waking up to him screaming from his bedroom in the middle of the night. Those screams were only silenced by the bottle of E&J on the top shelf of his closet. Eventually these screams broke apart his family and he drank himself to death alone in Fergus Falls, MN. The scars of that war didn't stop with him. My mother was unable to maintain her 2 marriages. I made a painful decision to remove her from my life in 2016 so that I could stand between my children and the mental damage she continues to carry with her.

In the late 90s, I met one of the most incredible men in my life. My father-in-law, Gaylon Entgelmeier. Gaylon served in the jungles of Viet Nam. Like many he came home to a largely ungrateful unempathetic country. As a testament to the man he is, he put his head down and went to work. He delivered mail in St. Paul, drove school busses, and cleaned a bar at night. Nobody can quite explain when he slept. But he and his wife Lana raised 3 beautiful daughters and have 4 grandchildren.

A few years ago I was on a fishing boat talking to Galen about his retirement future and what he planned to do with the surprisingly comfortable savings he'd accumulated. Assuming he'd talk about a boat or some travel he slammed me again with the character I'd grown to love and appreciate. He sighed and said "well, nobody was ever there for me and I will be there for my granddaughters. I'm going to help them go to college."

The pride in which he expressed that was muffled to me by the beginning of his sentence. "Nobody was ever there for me". I realized that would be the same thing my grandpa would say if he was still with us. Nobody was ever there for them.

When I met Chris and the crew at Hometown Hero Outdoors that landed on me. These people are being there for men and women who need them. They show up with passion and empathy and love in a genuine mission to help put these people back together and let them know they aren't alone. Furthermore, in this day of screens and devices they get them OUTSIDE. Away from the stresses and trappings of modern life. Many being able to engage with a passion they've long had, making it even more conducive to opening up and receiving that support. Or, for the first time getting outside and experiencing a whole new world where they can let it go and bond with those who understand their struggles.

They are there for them and that's why I support HHO and I can think of no better mission for any tax dollars we may be blessed to direct but to HHO and their mission.

Sincerely,



Shane Liberda, Ham Lake MN

2025, February 7th

To: Members of the Minnesota House & Senate

Subject: Urgent Support for Funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO)

Dear Minnesota Legislators,

I am writing to strongly urge your support for funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO), an organization dedicated to providing outdoor-based mental health programs for military personnel, veterans, and first responders in Minnesota. HHO has profoundly impacted the lives of those who have served our country and communities by offering meaningful outdoor experiences that promote healing, connection, and well-being.

As someone who supports Veteran and First Responder mental health efforts, I have witnessed the life-changing impact these outdoor experiences have on participants. These programs provide more than just recreational opportunities—they offer healing, connection, restoration, and renewed purpose.

The mental health crisis among veterans, law enforcement, firefighters, and EMS personnel is well-documented. Programs like HHO address this crisis in a proven and effective way:

- 73.8% of participants report “Excellent” mental health after their outdoor adventure.
- 75.4% experience a significant reduction in stress.
- 91.8% rate their experience as “Excellent.”

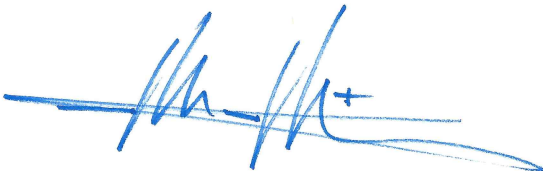
While HHO has been successful in securing funding through private sources, legislative support would allow us to serve even more Minnesotans, ensuring more of our heroes receive the benefits of these programs. This investment is not just about supporting those who serve—it’s also about strengthening Minnesota’s economy. Funding these initiatives means tax dollars go back into our state, supporting local businesses, outfitters, guides, mental health professionals and rural communities that benefit directly from these outdoor activities.

I respectfully urge you to advocate for and approve funding for these critical programs. Our heroes have given everything for us—it’s time we stand up and support them in return.

The mission of restoring our Veterans and First Responders to their communities, families and themselves is a whole of Minnesota effort. We all need to do our part!

Thank you for your time and dedication to Minnesota’s veterans, first responders, and military personnel. I appreciate your leadership and commitment to their well-being.

Minnesota Strong Together!



MARK WIENS

Colonel (Retired) U.S. Army

Representative (Retired) Minnesota State House

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Nick Joyce and I am writing to support Hometown Heroes Outdoors in their continued support for Veterans, First Responders, and their families to navigate mental health and overall wellness. In 2024, I, along with a few coworkers, were able to partake in a fishing excursion coordinated by Mr. Chris Tetrault and Hometown Heroes Outdoors.

I am a Police Officer and had the tragic and unspeakable loss of three friends and coworkers to a horrific act of violence. The days and weeks that followed those events were a blur, but Chris had reached out to me and explained what Hometown Heroes Outdoors is, and what they stand for. In talking with Chris, this was an avenue I believed could be a beneficial opportunity to cope with the tragic events, while spending some time outdoors and being able to unplug from "life" for a few hours.

Chris and his entire crew at Hometown Heroes Outdoors are committed to caring for first responders in this state, and they need help from the legislature to help support their efforts. Most notably, they helped injured officer Arik Mattson in his recovery efforts, and I believe they stand to help many more first responders, and their families cope with the trauma we are exposed to in our daily work. Notably, when I went on a fishing excursion in 2024, a coworker of mine was able to bring his Wife and youngest daughter along on the trip. Since the tragic events had struck our department, this one of the first times I was able to see that coworker truly unwind, and make lasting memories with his youngest daughter, his wife, all while enjoying an evening on the water and catching some walleye along the way.

The work of Hometown Heroes Outdoors is essential to help care for the mental health trauma and scars that first responders endure in the daily workings of our careers, let alone the tragic loss of three dear friends and coworkers. It is because of my own experience, I implore you to unanimously support H.F. 679 and provide the ongoing work that Hometown Heroes Outdoors believes in.

Thank you for the time. If you have any further follow up for me, Mr. Chris Tetrault has my contact information, and I would be happy to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Nick Joyce

Respected members of the Minnesota House and Senate,

As a police officer, I made a career of helping and supporting people on their worst days. The toll of that responsibility and those experiences eventually became too much to carry and I knew I could no longer go on in the profession that I dedicated my life to.

Even though I knew it was a survival instinct to walk away, it was still one of the most difficult decisions I made in my life. The fear and uncertainty of what would happen next was almost unbearable.

Hours and hours of therapy over the following months and years since I took off that badge have changed my life. I regained the confidence and mental strength to step out of my comfort zone to attend events such as those hosted by Hometown Hero Outdoors.

During these events, I have had the opportunity to spend time with men and women that have had many similar professional life experiences as myself - good and bad. In those connections, I recognized the same camaraderie and bond that brought me so much joy and pride when I worked as a police officer. This support network has been an incredibly important part of my healing - not only for myself, but my family.

Financial support of organizations such as Hometown Hero Outdoors is not only an investment in our current and former first responders, it's an investment in public safety.

Chris House

Andy Betsinger – 14101 Iodine St NW Ramsey, MN 55303 - 02/10/2024

Minnesota Senate / House

Subject: Support for Hometown Hero's Program

Dear Members of the Minnesota Senate / House,

My name is Andy Betsinger, and I am writing to you today to share my positive experience with Hometown Hero's. As a U.S. Air Force Veteran and a current police officer in the state of Minnesota, I understand firsthand the unique stressors and demands placed upon military veterans and first responders. Finding healthy outlets and building supportive networks is crucial for maintaining well-being and ensuring we can continue to serve our community effectively.

Hometown Hero's provides an invaluable opportunity to connect with fellow veterans and first responders through outdoor activities. This program fosters a sense of camaraderie and allows us to openly share our experiences with individuals who understand the challenges we face. The opportunity to engage in these activities in a relaxed environment has been incredibly beneficial to my mental and emotional health. It has also facilitated great dialogue and the formation of what I believe will be life-long friendships.

I believe that supporting programs like Hometown Hero's is an investment in the well-being of those who have dedicated their lives to serving our country and our communities. These programs play a vital role in fostering a sense of belonging, promoting mental health, and ultimately, ensuring that veterans and first responders have the support they need to thrive. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Andy Betsinger

2/7/2025

To: Members of the Minnesota House & Senate

Subject: Urgent Support for Funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO)

Dear Minnesota Legislators,

I am writing to strongly urge your support for funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO), an organization dedicated to providing outdoor-based mental health programs for military personnel, veterans, and first responders in Minnesota. HHO has profoundly impacted the lives of those who have served our country and communities by offering meaningful outdoor experiences that promote healing, connection, and well-being.

As someone who has been a part of this organization over the last 6 years I have first hand seen the growth in our members. Seeing someone on their first trip that has not had these opportunities in their life. Then online or in person hearing their story of how that one trip changed their outlook on life is humbling. So many of these men and women lose a part of themselves when they serve. I have witnessed the life-changing impact these outdoor experiences have on participants. These programs provide more than just recreational opportunities—they offer healing, connection, and renewed purpose.

The mental health crisis among veterans, law enforcement, firefighters, and EMS personnel is well-documented. Programs like HHO address this crisis in a proven and effective way:

- 73.8% of participants report “Excellent” mental health after their outdoor adventure.
- 75.4% experience a significant reduction in stress.
- 91.8% rate their experience as “Excellent.”

While HHO has been successful in securing funding through private sources, legislative support would allow us to serve even more Minnesotans, ensuring more of our heroes receive the benefits of these programs. This investment is not just about supporting those who serve—it’s also about strengthening Minnesota’s economy. Funding these initiatives means tax dollars go back into our state, supporting local businesses, outfitters, guides, mental health professionals and rural communities that benefit directly from these outdoor activities.

I respectfully urge you to advocate for and approve funding for these critical programs. Our heroes have given everything for us—it’s time we stand up and support them in return.

Thank you for your time and dedication to Minnesota’s veterans, first responders, and military personnel. I appreciate your leadership and commitment to their well-being.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Bollin
Gambling Manager

25820 Lofton Ave.

Chisago City, MN 55013

651-353-2242

2/7/2025

To: Members of the Minnesota House & Senate

Subject: Urgent Support for Funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO)

Dear Esteemed Minnesota Legislators,

I am writing to earnestly request your support for funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO), an organization that provides outdoor-based mental health programs for military personnel, veterans, and first responders in Minnesota. HHO has made a significant difference in the lives of those who have served our country and communities by offering meaningful outdoor experiences that foster healing, connection, and well-being.

As someone who has personally benefited from HHO, I can attest to the life-changing impact of their programs. When I needed support the most and the military wasn't there, HHO stepped in. During a time when life seemed bleak, HHO provided me with a much-needed connection to the outdoors and to like-minded individuals who understood my problems and struggles. These experiences offered me healing, connection, and a renewed sense of purpose.

The mental health crisis among veterans, law enforcement, firefighters, and EMS personnel is well-documented. Programs like HHO address this crisis in a proven and effective manner:

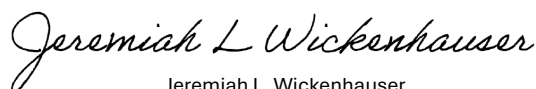
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While HHO has successfully secured funding through private sources, legislative support would enable us to serve even more Minnesotans, ensuring that more of our heroes receive the benefits of these programs. This investment is not only about supporting those who serve—it is also about strengthening Minnesota’s economy. Funding these initiatives means tax dollars are reinvested into our state, supporting local businesses, outfitters, guides, mental health professionals, and rural communities that benefit directly from these outdoor activities.

I respectfully urge you to advocate for and approve funding for these critical programs. Our heroes have given everything for us—it is time we stand up and support them in return.

Thank you for your time and dedication to Minnesota’s veterans, first responders, and military personnel. I appreciate your leadership and commitment to their well-being.

Sincerely,



Jeremiah L. Wickenhauser

CMSgt, MN ANG

133 CRF, NGB CR PROJO

Cell: 320-223-3277

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to you to express my support and appreciation for Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO). This organization is a vital component to society today. Without realizing it, HHO is an organization that can do so much for so many people in different ways. For so long mental health has been ignored or viewed as a taboo topic. In reality it is something that affects many walks of life, especially with veterans and first responders. HHO's main focus is to connect veterans and first responders outdoors.

Recently in 2024, I was able to become more involved with HHO. The President, Chris Tetrault is a longtime friend, and someone I have respect for not only in his role as a law enforcement officer, but his mission with HHO. I was invited to attend Police Week 2024 in Washington D.C. for the first time. I was there to help the organization spread the word of their mission at Tent City.

During Police Week, I saw overwhelming support of HHO from veterans and first responders that were familiar with HHO. I also had the chance to share the mission of HHO with those that were unfamiliar. The number of people that had not heard of HHO and thought it was a great idea was incredible. Not a single person walked away without wanting to learn more of HHO and it's mission.

Our veterans and first responders deserve to have resources available to them. Funding for HHO is necessary to continue to support to these brave men and women we rely on for our freedoms.

Respectfully,

Jacob Isaacson

Minnesota Police Officer

To: MN House and Senate:

I am writing in support of Hometown Heros Outdoors. I am currently employed at Best Defense Armory and Range in Forest Lake MN and we partner with the HHO team of dedicated volunteers. I have attended numerous HHO fundraisers over the years and I am impressed with their mission and their work ethic. This group of men and women volunteers consistently go the extra mile for our men and women who serve our country in so many valuable positions. Veterans, First Responders and active service members all benefit in so many ways because of HHO and their efforts.

Our Veterans face so many challenges ranging from homelessness to mental health issues, PTSD, physical disability from injuries sustained on duty and even suicide. Unfortunately, many times this suffering goes unnoticed and frequently it goes untreated. Our first responders also suffer many of the same ailments as do current service members. HHO offers a healthy outlet for these men and women to enjoy the outdoors by participating in hunting and fishing experiences that can be and quite frequently are life changing. Civilian life can be challenging in many ways for these men and women. Having opportunities like this, which otherwise might not be probable or even possible, can ease the suffering caused by civilian life and also create new hobbies for them to enjoy. I personally have witnessed several testimonies by people that have been affected by HHO, and I am moved to tears most of every time. Listening to their experiences and seeing the joy on their faces when they tell their stories is quite memorable. Changing someone's life for the better after they have sacrificed so much for their country is a most honorable cause. As a retired law enforcement officer, I am proud to be associated with and partnered with Hometown Heros Outdoors. Their volunteers are a great group of dedicated people that are amazing to work with and everyone of them that I have come across has exemplified the noble cause behind their mission.

Funding programs like HHO will have a lasting impact on the men and women who serve our country. Programs like these tend to fall through the cracks far too often when it comes to receiving necessary funds to better the lives of American heroes. They need our support to be able to continue to support those who gave so much.

Respectfully,

Dave Kisch

Retired Law Enforcement Officer

Proud HHO Supporter

February 7th, 2025

To: Members of the Minnesota House & Senate

Subject: Urgent Support for Funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO)

Dear Minnesota Legislators,

I am writing to strongly urge your support for funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO), an organization dedicated to providing outdoor-based mental health programs for military personnel, veterans, and first responders in Minnesota. HHO has profoundly impacted the lives of those who have served our country and communities by offering meaningful outdoor experiences that promote healing, connection, and well-being.

As someone who ***has personally benefited from HHO, has seen the impact on a friend/family member, supports veteran/first responder mental health efforts***, I have witnessed the life-changing impact these outdoor experiences have on participants. These programs provide more than just recreational opportunities—they offer healing, connection, and renewed purpose.

HHO has given me the opportunity to meet other veterans and first responders throughout Minnesota. The Staff of HHO created a community and culture to bring veterans and first responders together and made me feel that I am not alone. I have seen the impact of this organization first hand with my cousin that is a veteran and myself as a first responder.

The mental health crisis among veterans, law enforcement, firefighters, and EMS personnel is well-documented. Programs like HHO address this crisis in a proven and effective way:

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While HHO has been successful in securing funding through private sources, legislative support would allow us to serve even more Minnesotans, ensuring more of our heroes receive the benefits of these programs. This investment is not just about supporting those who serve—it’s also about strengthening Minnesota’s economy. Funding these initiatives means tax dollars go back into our state, supporting local businesses, outfitters, guides, mental health professionals and rural communities that benefit directly from these outdoor activities.

I respectfully urge you to advocate for and approve funding for these critical programs. Our heroes have given everything for us—it’s time we stand up and support them in return.

Thank you for your time and dedication to Minnesota’s veterans, first responders, and military personnel. I appreciate your leadership and commitment to their well-being.

Sincerely,

Sergeant Anna Taylor

Saint Paul Police Department

Vice- Human Trafficking/ Missing Persons Unit

Minnesota Human Trafficking Investigators Task Force (MNHTITF)

367 Grove St.

Saint Paul, MN 55101

Anna.Taylor@ci.stpaul.mn.us

February 07, 2025

To: Members of the Minnesota House & Senate

Subject: Urgent Support for Funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO)

Dear Minnesota Legislators,

I am writing to strongly urge your support for funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO), an organization dedicated to providing outdoor-based mental health programs for military personnel, veterans, and first responders in Minnesota. HHO has profoundly impacted the lives of those who have served our country and communities by offering meaningful outdoor experiences that promote healing, connection, and well-being.

As someone who supports veteran/first responder mental health efforts, I have witnessed the life-changing impact these outdoor experiences have on participants. These programs provide more than just recreational opportunities—they offer healing, connection, and renewed purpose. The change in members' demeanor when they arrive for a trip/event, to when they leave the trip/event is absolutely amazing. I have personally seen the change in participants from a look of defeat when they arrive, to laughter and smiles when they leave. They ultimately knew that they weren't alone and had made connections with people that understood what they were going through.

The mental health crisis among veterans, law enforcement, firefighters, and EMS personnel is well-documented. Programs like HHO address this crisis in a proven and effective way:

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While HHO has been successful in securing funding through private sources it has been more difficult the last few years, legislative support would allow us to serve even more Minnesotans, ensuring more of our heroes receive the benefits from our programs. This investment is not just about supporting those who serve—it's also about strengthening Minnesota's economy. Funding these initiatives means tax dollars go back into our state, supporting local businesses, outfitters, guides, and mental health professionals and rural communities that benefit directly from these outdoor activities.

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Thank you for your time and dedication to Minnesota's veterans, first responders, and military personnel. I appreciate your leadership and commitment to their well-being.

Sincerely,

Brian H Chaffee

HHO Event Director

brian.chaffee@hometownherooutdoors.org

February 9, 2025

To whom it may concern;

Outside of youth sports, I've never worn a uniform. A uniform to serve this country or our communities. For about 20 years I wore a suit in corporate America. Just a few years ago I left to care for a sick child (who is now thriving) and never looked back. With the support of my incredible wife, I took the path of small business ownership and am still grinding away to live that dream. From the beginning of this phase of my life, one of the many pleasures of being my own boss is the opportunity to choose where the funds go when there is any extra. Certainly, it starts with bills and the bank and taxes. After that we hope that there is enough left to help fuel good work somewhere.

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In the late 90s, I met one of the most incredible men in my life. My father-in-law, Gaylon Entgelmeier. Gaylon served in the jungles of Viet Nam. Like many he came home to a largely ungrateful unempathetic country. As a testament to the man he is, he put his head down and went to work. He delivered mail in St. Paul, drove school busses, and cleaned a bar at night. Nobody can quite explain when he slept. But he and his wife Lana raised 3 beautiful daughters and have 4 grandchildren.

A few years ago I was on a fishing boat talking to Galen about his retirement future and what he planned to do with the surprisingly comfortable savings he'd accumulated. Assuming he'd talk about a boat or some travel he slammed me again with the character I'd grown to love and appreciate. He sighed and said "well, nobody was ever there for me and I will be there for my granddaughters. I'm going to help them go to college."

The pride in which he expressed that was muffled to me by the beginning of his sentence. "Nobody was ever there for me". I realized that would be the same thing my grandpa would say if he was still with us. Nobody was ever there for them.

When I met Chris and the crew at Hometown Hero Outdoors that landed on me. These people are being there for men and women who need them. They show up with passion and empathy and love in a genuine mission to help put these people back together and let them know they aren't alone. Furthermore, in this day of screens and devices they get them OUTSIDE. Away from the stresses and trappings of modern life. Many being able to engage with a passion they've long had, making it even more conducive to opening up and receiving that support. Or, for the first time getting outside and experiencing a whole new world where they can let it go and bond with those who understand their struggles.

They are there for them and that's why I support HHO and I can think of no better mission for any tax dollars we may be blessed to direct but to HHO and their mission.

Sincerely,



Shane Liberda, Ham Lake MN

To whom it may concern,

I am writing today to show my appreciation and support for Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO). HHO is an organization that takes active-duty military, veterans and first responders on outdoor activities with an emphasis on mental health. For too long these professions have been told to “deal with it” when it comes to mental health and because of that, suicide is rampant. HHO’s focus is on mental health using the outdoors as the vessel to start the conversation.

I have volunteered with HHO for a few years and have watched many people come to events and leave with an understanding that it’s okay to feel the way they’re feeling and that they’re not alone in those feelings. HHO can provide resources to help those who need it. I was also able to attend Police Week in Washington DC with HHO in 2024. At that event, I was able to share HHO’s mission with many people. I ran into people who attended HHO events in Minnesota and other states who wanted to know how to get more involved in the organization due to their positive experiences. I also spoke with people who wanted to know how to start a chapter in their state because they saw a benefit to what HHO is wanting to accomplish.

I have been a police officer for 15 years and since going to HHO events and listening to people’s testimonials helped me come to terms with my own struggle with mental health. Knowing I’m not alone gave me the push to seek help. Being able to talk about those struggles openly with people in the same profession was very freeing.

The great outdoors can heal the weariest of souls, and Hometown Hero Outdoors wants to use that for the brave men and women who put their lives on the line for our freedom. Funding Hometown Hero Outdoors will allow them to continue saving those who save us.

Respectfully,

Craig Elgin

Minnesota Police Sergeant

To: Members of the Minnesota House & Senate

Subject: Urgent Support for Funding Hometown Hero Outdoors (HHO)

Dear Minnesota Legislators,

I am retired police sergeant with 29.5 years of service with the Eagan Police Department. I am writing today to ask for your support of SF 674 & 679, funding for Hometown Heroes Outdoors. I became acquainted with the organization 2 years ago. I have firsthand observed the benefits to our first responders and military from HHO. This would include both outreach programs as well as therapy with likeminded individuals in nature and or group activities to reduce PTSD and suicide in our treasured veterans. This past summer Todd West, a neighbor of mine here in Crow Wing County, a retired deputy from Dakota County, passed away in a crash on our county road. Todd survived two different officers involved shootings in his years of service. The effects of those incidents were with Todd during his service and followed him to retirement. I did not reach out to Todd in time to inquire about help, reassurance, or guidance from HHO and their resources. I ask for your support as well as your colleagues on this matter. There are many more Todd's out there to reach, to help, to let them know we care, and inform that we are not alone.

HHO will make a positive impact in first responders and military veteran's lives.

Thank You,

Brad Ramthun