



STATE OF MINNESOTA

# Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee

Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs  
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*Trahern Pollard, Chair*

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Greetings,

Housed within the Youth Justice Office at DPS-Office of Justice Programs (DPS-OJP), the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) oversees Minnesota's compliance with the core protections of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP). For the past 40 years, JJAC has worked to improve Minnesota's juvenile justice system by aligning stakeholders and fostering collaboration. An advisory body to the Governor and the Legislature, JJAC partners with communities across the state each year to author a state plan to reduce the disparate treatment of young people who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) in Minnesota's juvenile justice system.

## **JJAC supports implementing immediate measures to address the Child Boarding Crisis in Juvenile Correctional Facilities in Minnesota.**

As the Minnesota Juvenile Detention Association (MNJDA) and JJAC have identified, there is a crisis in available services and placement for youth with significant mental health issues and lengthy trauma histories. There are children with chronic mental health needs that are boarding in Juvenile Correctional Facilities because no alternative placements or services exist or because the placement will not accept them. These youth are waiting months and even years for placements that meet their mental health needs.

Untreated mental health needs can lead to unsafe behaviors, unsafe behaviors can lead to contact with law enforcement and repeated contact with law enforcement can lead to involvement in the juvenile justice system and placement in detention facilities.

JJAC recognizes that this is a short-term solution as we believe youth with persistent, and significant mental health issues should not be housed in detention facilities. However, the reality is that they currently are because often these children are placed in detention facilities, waiting months – or even years – for an appropriate placement. As a result, many of these youth are being housed without proper care in the only facilities that cannot refuse them: Correctional Facilities.

MNJDA has identified the critical need for increased mental health services in their facilities to best serve these youth. The Juvenile Corrections system and detention facilities were not designed to meet the needs of youth with persistent and significant mental health issues. Crisis funding will enable youth in detention facilities to receive increased mental health services from qualified mental health professionals.

**I am asking you to support SF2546, as well as increased funding to implement the strategies laid out in this bill.**

In supporting bill SF2546, your return on investment would significantly enhance the efforts of JJAC and transform the ability of the Youth Justice Office within the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs to improve outcomes for youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Sincerely,

*Trahern Pollard*

Trahern Pollard, Chair  
Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee