

Kissy Coakley
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April 1st, 2025—

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

I am the founder and executive director of Kissy's Stay Put Services. I am urging you to **support SF 1908/ HF 1775**, a bill to mandate the collection and reporting of pre-trial data.

At Kissy's Stay Put Services (KSP), our mission is to meet women's needs using a client-centered approach and trauma-informed care. We strive to help women experience healthy, safe, and equitable relationships by building communities free of domestic violence one woman at a time.

THE PROBLEM: Each year, at least 69,000 people are booked into local jails in Minnesota. At Kissy's Stay Put Services, justice-impacted women, in particular black and brown women, are being charged and criminalized at a much higher rate than white women. MN's pretrial system is not only criminalizing women but it is also criminalizing families, including children. When women are held in jail because they can't afford their bail, this causes a ripple effect on the whole family, from losing employment, and housing, and children being out of school for an extended period, which creates more unintended consequences on the family with the child protection system. In black and brown communities, women are the primary caregivers of the family and when the woman is being criminalized for defending herself or engaging in activities due to an abusive situation and held in jail for weeks and months, this destroys the whole family structure and that impacts community wellness on a larger scale too because when families are unstable and experiencing trauma, pain, and abuse, this ripples out.

Minnesotans deserve transparency and accountability from the pretrial system. But right now, it is practically impossible for lawmakers or the public to access county-by-county data that would provide a clear and complete picture of pretrial practices in our state and if there are areas of disparities and areas that need improvement in order to provide justice and fairness.

This lack of transparency prevents lawmakers from identifying and addressing systemic harms, and it removes a critical check against public disinformation about the pretrial and cash bail systems.

THE SOLUTION: SF 1908/HF 1775 would improve transparency by requiring Minnesota counties to collect and report data for everyone who is subject to the pretrial process, including:

- The defendant's race, ethnicity, age, sex, gender, housing status, and occupation;
- Data about a defendant's bail including whether bail was required for release, the amount of bail required, the judge who set the bail, whether the defendant was released pre-trial, the length of pre-trial incarceration, and whether (and how) a defendant paid the bail; and
- Other pending cases associated with the defendant; and
- The outcome of the defendant's case.

The current system is already collecting this data but in silos. We need this data to be transparent and unified in order to know pretrial practices and where unintended lack of fairness is operating. If the current system aims to provide public safety and justice, we need to know if our current practices are generating those outcomes or not.

Minnesota's pretrial system impacts individual lives, families, and communities, and it shouldn't be allowed to operate in the dark. I urge you to support the passage of SF 1908/ HF 1775 for pretrial data transparency in Minnesota.

Sincerely,
Kissy Coakley
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