



Office of the
DAKOTA COUNTY SHERIFF

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JOE LEKO, SHERIFF
DANIEL BIANCONI, CHIEF DEPUTY SHERIFF

1580 Highway 55
Hastings, MN 55033

March 3, 2025

Dear Honorable Legislators,

I am writing in support of House File 135 expanding State Statute 609.2232 requiring consecutive sentences for inmates convicted of assaulting detention staff to include local detention facilities. Correctional deputies work in a volatile jail environment where inmates sometimes become physically aggressive toward other inmates and staff. Our staff is highly trained and emphasizes de-escalation in our facility, which is reflected in our minimal use of force by our deputies in our 264-bed jail. Our deputies used force only 30 times last year with over 9,000 inmates booked. Dakota County Correctional Deputies were assaulted 22 times in 2024 and 18 times in 2023. This includes injuries sustained where they were punched, kicked, spit on, or bit requiring medical care. Many of those instances, deputies were called to break up inmate on inmate fights and were then assaulted. These assaults on our deputies are forwarded for criminal charges, however, sentencing is often wrapped into their original criminal charges and served concurrently. It is important that we support our public servants by holding those who assault them accountable for their actions in hope that it will deter future assaults.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Leko'.

Joe Leko
Dakota County Sheriff