

January 28, 2021

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Governor Walz:

Thank you for your leadership and ongoing partnership amid the many crises Minnesotans face. This past year has presented previously unimaginable challenges including the enduring public health and economic crisis caused by COVID, the murder of George Floyd, civil unrest, a national reckoning on race and racism, and the rise of hate, extremism and disinformation encouraged over the past four years from the highest levels of our federal government.

While the impacts of these crises have created unprecedented circumstances locally for our neighbors, workers, and businesses, these events have reverberated in communities across our nation, and around the world. For this reason, now more than ever, it is vital that we meet the enormity of this moment with a new vision for how we care for one another to ensure no one is left behind. As part of those efforts, we are pleased to express our support for the State Aid for Emergencies (SAFE) Account included in your 2021 budget.

Following the attempted insurrection at the United States Capitol on January 6, public safety concerns related to the civil unrest continue. This means ongoing collaboration between our law enforcement agencies, and the Minnesota National Guard will remain an invaluable asset as will ensuring our first responders have the resources to ensure the safety and security of people, property, and free speech. Public Safety officers are not the only civil servants involved in responding to civil unrest. A comprehensive response that includes community connectors, trusted messengers, public health, emergency preparedness, and mental health services is imperative to fully address community needs after a civil unrest event. We would anticipate and hope that the SAFE Account will help with addressing these costs and needs as well.

Just as we have continued to respond to the many needs of our community amid these crises, we continue to incur an array of response costs we'd neither budgeted for, nor have the funds available to cover. We appreciate that the SAFE Account is proposed as a way to address these costs. As the State Legislature considers a biennial budget, along with relief and support measures, it is essential that local governments have access to additional direct aid that helps us manage the vast array of needs our residents, workers, and businesses have, and the related costs. In addition, we also ask that you consider resubmitting a request for federal disaster relief to respond to the ongoing needs of our community following civil unrest.

Finally, during and beyond the end of these compound crises, we need comprehensive and holistic public health supports including community connection and trusted messenger activities, ongoing economic support for families beyond a one-time payment, increased access to mental health services, ongoing relief for workers including



additional unemployment benefits, additional support for those in our community experiencing homelessness including pathways to long-term housing, and resources for businesses impacted by the pandemic and civil unrest to ensure we can rebuild our local economy.

As we continue charting our path forward toward healing the many ills we face, Saint Paul and Ramsey County will remain engaged partners committed to ensuring no one is left behind. We look forward to continuing this vital work with you, and all of our partners at the State amid these challenging times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melvin Carter".

Melvin Carter
Mayor
City of Saint Paul

Toni Carter
Board Chair
Ramsey County Board of Commissioners

cc:
Senator Paul Gazelka
Senator Susan Kent
Senator Warren Limmer
Representative Melissa Hortman
Representative Kurt Daudt
Representative Carlos Mariani