

HENNEPIN COUNTY
ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

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2/14/23

Representative Kelly Moller
509 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Kelly Moller and Public Safety Committee Members,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my support for HF 1437, which would increase funding for crime victim services by 50 million dollars per biennium.

As Hennepin County Attorney, I cannot pursue justice on behalf of victims of crimes and promote public safety without increasing investments in victims/survivors and the programs that serve them. Our criminal legal system often fails to address the trauma suffered by crime victims, who may then create other victims by harming others. This bill will provide needed services which can address trauma and interrupt these cycles of violence and abuse which will ultimately create safer communities.

I support HF 1437 because it will provide programs currently not offered by the criminal legal system. Over the past several decades, elected officials have passed tough-on-crime legislation that dramatically increased the number of people sent to prison and the time they spend there. While the state has invested substantially in punitive measures, it has not provided enough funding for direct assistance to victim/survivors, culturally responsive programming, prevention programming, and more.

As Hennepin County Attorney, I understand the difficulties crime survivors experience as a result of being harmed and the degree to which the legal system may create more harm by relying on them to get criminal convictions. Rather than go through the trauma of the traditional legal system, some victim/survivors want other options which, for the most part, aren't available to them. I am well aware that the criminal legal system often ignores the voices of victim/survivors. Today, I ask that we listen to their voices, as well as those who advocate for them, by supporting increased funding to crime victim services by passing HF 1437.

Sincerely,

Mary F. Moriarty
Hennepin County Attorney