



May 1, 2023

Dear Chairs Rep. Moller and Sen. Latz:

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE), a union representing over 16,000 state workers across all of Minnesota's agencies, boards and commissions, we would first like to thank the House and Senate for their strong investments in our public safety system, particularly for fully-funding the Department of Corrections' (DOC) operating deficiency funding request. The DOC is facing a staffing crisis, requiring many of our members working out of class and covering long shifts in the facilities' secured posts. This means our case managers and other educational and therapeutic staff are stretched beyond their capacity to deliver services. We would also like to thank the committee for their strong investment in community supervision and the single funding formula taskforce. We hope that this will provide secure, equitable and ongoing funding for the three supervised release delivery systems.

We respectfully ask that the conference committee adopt the Governor's recommendations on staffing maintenance requests for Department of Public Safety (DPS) and DOC, as well as the DOC's safe staffing recommendations from the 2020 OLA report, and the recruitment and retention request, many of which were also included in the Senate position. With the litany of additional programs being proposed on programming and early incentivized release, the agencies need to recruit and retain employees to ensure staff are able to provide these critical program services. MAPE members are tasked with addressing the incarcerated population's medical, mental health, educational and vocational programming, transition needs, and supervision requirements. If DOC is unable to adequately staff, hire and retain employees it impacts every area of our system. An individual's success is dependent upon appropriate programming and quality employee recruitment and retention.

Furthermore, we ask the committee to fund the virtual courts line item. This is a proposal that MAPE members have worked on with the DOC to increase access for incarcerated individuals who need to make a court appearance. Left unfunded, our case managers are spending large amounts of time running Zoom meetings instead of their core job functions of preparing individuals for their release.

We thank you for your ongoing work and commitment to funding a comprehensive public safety system.