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January 26, 2023

Chair Hornstein,
Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
545 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: H.F. No. 503 -- Reintegration License Bill

Dear Chair Hornstein and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you to express strong and heartfelt support for H.F. No. 503, the reintegration license bill you are considering. I write on behalf of myself and the Minnesota Collaborative Justice Project on Prisoner Reentry, which is a collective impact project that includes representatives from state and federal agencies, nonprofits, law firms, corporations, and the Pro Bono Institute in Washington, D. C.

I am a member of the Steering Committee of the Minnesota Collaborative Justice Project on Prisoner Reentry (“MNCJP”), which was formed more than six years ago to address the need to reduce recidivism by eliminating barriers to successful reentry to society from prison. The MNCJP has several working groups, including Reentry Planning (which creates and presents reentry courses in prisons), Access to Services (such as housing, employment, transportation, health care, identification, licenses, etc.), and Policy and Advocacy. I chair the Access to Services Working Group and its Civil Legal Needs Initiative (which connects volunteer lawyers to reentering persons with civil legal needs regarding child custody and support and other family law matters, debt, proper identification, tax matters, past due fines, etc.). We work to address issues that can serve as substantial barriers to successful reentry. Our Policy and Advocacy Working Group creates and supports legislative and regulatory initiatives that help with reentry. One such initiative is H.F. No. 503.

For persons returning from prison, it is imperative that they obtain gainful employment and adequate housing so that they can reestablish themselves in the community. Often it is essential that they have a driver’s license to enable them to drive to find and maintain a job and necessary housing. Without appropriate employment and housing, reentering persons may well return to making money through unlawful means and thereby reoffend and return to incarceration. That result, which occurs far too often in our society, is truly bad for the individual, their family, and the community; it is expensive and wasteful, both in monetary and

The Honorable Frank Hornstein, Chair

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human terms. By making available a reintegration license under H.F. No. 503, another significant obstacle to successful reentry will be reduced or eliminated for many.

In the most emphatic terms possible, the MNCJP and I encourage you to support and enact H.F. No. 503 to make available reintegration licenses to those returning from prison. Thank you for your service to the State of Minnesota and for your attention to this letter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "James L. Volling". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James L. Volling

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