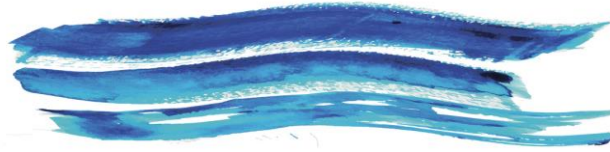


Three Rivers Restorative Justice



Respect · Accountability · Healing

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There are solid reasons to advance HF 46 “Office of Juvenile Restorative Justice”:

- Nationwide **94% of those who suffered a crime and participate in Restorative Justice (RJ) recommend it to others** compared to 24% of crime victims who experience the traditional judicial process.
- A recent study in Rochester Public Schools showed that when punitive measures are used on juveniles 70% of them reoffend within the year, when restorative practices are used, only 20% reoffend. Longmont CO Police found that 60% of juveniles who went through the judicial system reoffended but 10% who went through an RJ program reoffended.
- The cost of Restorative Justice is only 1/8th of the cost of the punitive justice system and the Justice Research and Statistics Association reported in Dec 2020 that the restorative Justice programs studied produced “**eight times more benefit in costs of crimes prevented than the cost of delivering restorative justice**”.

There are currently 17 counties in MN using restorative justice as well as the MN DOC, but resources are limited and it is still not available to most Minnesotans.

Passing HF 46 and expanding Restorative Justice for MN youth will decrease the following:

- reoffending
- racial inequity
- ineffective use of punitive measures
- case backlogs
- long waits before cases are addressed
- costs

Passing HF 46 will increase public safety and will enable those harmed by crime to move forward with hope.

DOC Commissioner Paul Schnell supports this bill and said “Restorative justice lifts up and provides healing for victims and builds stronger communities. ... One of the easiest places to introduce restorative justice has been in the juvenile justice sphere. I think it is going to be a game changer.”

MN's juvenile justice system needs to provide the tool of restorative justice for every county attorney, peace officer and victim's advocate. In SE MN, Three Rivers Restorative Justice began offering the tool of Restorative Justice (RJ) to justice system partners 18 months ago and 6 counties are now referring cases and new cases are coming almost daily. So far all of the victims of crime who have participated in restorative justice in SE MN have said they are pleased with the outcome and would recommend it to others. Juveniles who have caused harm and are given the option of participating in restorative justice conferences routinely show increased empathy, decreased reoffending and 90% of them have completed the reparations agreements from their restorative conferences.

As a retired Federal Prison Chaplain and Program Manager I have seen hundreds of men who had lengthy criminal records turn the corner through restorative conversations with victims of crime and become the kind of people you would welcome as your neighbor. Also, every crime victim who participated in the restorative programs expressed satisfaction with the process and many said it was the first time something positive had come out of the trauma they experienced.

Helping young people develop empathy through this process before they seriously hurt someone motivated me to co-found Three Rivers Restorative Justice in 2019. This non profit organization still operates almost entirely with volunteers, many of us giving 20-40 hours per week. As more and more cases are being referred to us, we are reaching the point we can't keep up. We ask for you to help with the passage of this bill.

In closing here is one of the typical cases we see every week: A student at a middle school caused \$1200.00 of damage to the car of teacher. The teacher elected to use Three Rivers Restorative Justice to address the crime instead of having the young man charged. The reparations agreement was for the young man to help clear brush from the teacher's property. He expressed that he'd never had the chance to work outdoors like that and learned to enjoy being out in nature. The teacher expressed appreciation for his work and said she now has a better relationship with this student than even before the damage to her car.

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