



May 1, 2023

Representative Kelly Moller, Chair  
Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
479 State Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Senator Ron Latz, Chair  
Judiciary and Public Safety Committee  
Minnesota State Senate  
3105 Minnesota Senate Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Moller and Chair Latz,

Thank you for the opportunity allowing the Drug Policy Alliance (DPA) to weigh-in on specific legislation included in the House and Senate versions of the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Finance bills, SF2909.

The House version of the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Finance bill includes HF2041 (Gomez)/SF2261 (Oumou Verbeten), a bill that authorizes syringe services to possess, distribute, and dispose of syringes; authorizes the hypodermic syringes and changes to the state statute related to drug paraphernalia (See House version, Article 16, Sections 1-6 and 13-15).

We are pleased to see HF2041's language included in the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Finance bill as drug paraphernalia policy should be focused on saving lives and reducing the risks of overdose.

History has shown that harsh penalties for drug use and paraphernalia does nothing to help people and only worsens the tragic overdose crisis. Tougher laws and sentences around drug paraphernalia results in more death, avoidable diseases, and creates greater risks when individuals seek drugs and drug paraphernalia in the illicit market, particularly impacting low-income people and communities of color. These drug paraphernalia laws also threaten to punish nonusers involved in harm reduction activities.

The legislation, as it now stands, allows Minnesota to move forward with allowing syringe services providers to operate under and within defined parameters as well as decriminalizing drug paraphernalia and residues contained therein. These changes will undoubtedly reduce harm and save lives of Minnesotans.

We urge the conference committee to keep HF2041 included in the House and Senate versions of the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Finance bills, SF2909.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Emily Kaltenbach  
Senior Director, Criminal Legal & Policing Reform

C: Rep. Jamie Becker-Finn  
Rep. Sandra Feist  
Rep. Cedrick Frazier  
Rep. Brion Curran  
Sen. Clare Oumou Verbeten  
Sen. Sandra Pappas  
Sen. Judy Seeberger  
Sen. Bonnie Westlin