

HENNEPIN COUNTY

ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Mary F. Moriarty
Hennepin County Attorney
C-2000 Government Center
300 South 6th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55487
612-348-6221

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Representative Sandra Feist
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
409 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Bobby Joe Champion
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3401
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senate President Champion, Rep. Feist, and Members of the House and Senate:

I am writing to express my strong support for the passage of a bill that would establish the Office of Juvenile Restorative Justice.

We are facing a crisis in Minnesota with an extraordinary lack of options to provide the necessary supports and services for our youth. Creating this new office would be a welcome and important option for prosecutors in cases involving youth. Research has clearly demonstrated that restorative justice practices are effective at addressing the root causes of problematic behavior and promoting positive youth development, while also ensuring youth confront and take accountability for the harm they have caused. Additionally, restorative justice practices provide meaningful opportunities for victim engagement and repair of harm. This stands in contrast to responses focused on punishment, which can increase the likelihood of youth reoffending, have a significantly negative impact on youth, families and our communities, and too often fail to support the needs of victims.


As a prosecutor, ensuring community safety is my top priority. Meaningful accountability through restorative justice practices can play an important role in achieving improved community safety. The Office of Juvenile Restorative Justice would support and elevate programs that already exist, while also supporting the further growth of this work across Minnesota. The office would also help spotlight successful practices, promote training opportunities for organizers and participants, and share information about sources for financial support.

Additionally, I believe that investing in youth restorative justice will allow us to make meaningful progress to address the deep and pervasive racial disparities in our youth justice system. Restorative practices are indigenous practices and are grounded in community. Implementing restorative justice practices with a racial equity lens presents a critical opportunity to engage our community in efforts to sustainably reduce racial disparities and build trust while simultaneously improving community safety.

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I urge you to support the passage of this bill. The establishment of the Office of Juvenile Restorative Justice would be a significant step forward for our communities and would enhance community safety in the long run. As a prosecutor, I believe that the implementation of effective restorative justice practices is essential to creating a safer and more just society.

Sincerely,



Mary F. Moriarty
Hennepin County Attorney