



To: Chairs and Members of the Legislative Conference Committees
Minnesota Legislature

Re: Support for Advocate Confidentiality and Custodian Notice Provisions in Public Safety Omnibus bill

Dear Chairs and Members of the Conference Committees:

Violence Free Minnesota writes in strong support of two critical policy provisions: clarifying advocate confidentiality and changing the definition of “custodian” for the purposes of Order for Protection (OFP) cases. Violence Free Minnesota, the coalition to end relationship abuse, consists of over 90 member programs serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence in all 87 Minnesota counties.

Both measures reinforce core principles of survivor safety, privacy, and autonomy—values that must remain central to Minnesota’s response to domestic violence.

Confidentiality for Domestic Violence Advocates (HF 1083/SF 1055)

When survivors turn to community-based advocates, they are often doing so after experiencing immense harm, trauma, and fear. The strength it takes to seek help and safety should not be met with the fear that their disclosures could be used against them in a legal proceeding or made public in court. Yet without explicit statutory protections, that risk persists.

This proposal, included in both the House and Senate omnibus packages, affirms that communications between survivors and community-based domestic violence advocates are privileged—just like those with sexual assault counselors. It is a commonsense clarification that ensures survivors can safely access support without compromising their safety or legal standing.

Custodian Definition Change (HF 2781/SF 2979)

This provision, included in the House omnibus package, makes a technical change to the definition of custodian for the purpose of Orders for Protection. Under a law passed in the 2024 legislative session, OFP applicants now need to notify the custodians of any other minor children when applying for an OFP and when modifying or dropping an OFP. The definition of “custodian” in current law is overbroad and applies to anyone who has a legal obligation to the child, which

could include parties like daycare centers, schools, or sports coaches. This simple change would limit the definition of custodian to those with court ordered or statutory physical or legal custody, or those with custody by the consent of a custodial parent. This change conforms more to the common language and family court usages of the word “custodian” and would make the law much clearer for survivors and other custodians. These proposals are survivor-informed, narrowly tailored, and rooted in the lived experiences of advocates and survivors of relationship abuse across our state. We urge the conference committees to ensure that both provisions remain in the final legislative package.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the safety and dignity of survivors across Minnesota.

Guadalupe Lopez
Executive Director
Violence Free Minnesota