

MnJDA 
**Minnesota Juvenile
Detention Association**

April 20, 2022

Dear Chair Mariani and Chair Limmer,

Anoka County Juvenile
Center

Arrowhead Juvenile
Center

Dakota County Juvenile
Services Center

East Central Regional
Juvenile Center

Hennepin County
Juvenile Detention Center

Northwestern Minnesota
Juvenile Center

Prairie Lakes Youth
Programs

Ramsey County Juvenile
Detention Center

Red River Valley Juvenile
Center

Scott County Juvenile
Alternative Center

West Central Regional
Juvenile Center

On behalf of the Minnesota Juvenile Detention Association (MNJDA), we are writing to express our concerns with House Bill HF 4608 DE2 Amendment. MNJDA is an organization comprised of the Directors and Superintendents of the juvenile detention facilities in the State of Minnesota. Specifically, we are strongly opposed to the language that eliminates the use of Disciplinary Room Time (DRT) from all MN Department of Correction licensed facilities. We agree that youth should not be placed in their rooms unless necessary to maintain the safety of themselves or others and all other options have been exhausted. The health and wellbeing of the youth in our facilities is priority; however, we are **concerned** that the current language of this bill will create more unsafe situations which will have a detrimental impact on these youth.

MNJDA recognizes the prevalence of mental health and trauma amongst the youth that we serve. We strive to meet the safety and treatment needs of our youth; these needs often being interwoven. We recognize the potential traumatic impact that the use of unnecessary disciplinary room time (DRT) may have on our youth and have worked together with DOC's Inspection & Enforcement Unit to minimize the use of DRT. MNJDA member facilities continue to report reduced usage of DRT and are in support of a continuation of this trend, however, the complete elimination of DRT will create an unsafe environment for residents, staff, and visitors.

For years MNJDA and DOC's Inspection & Enforcement Unit have worked collaboratively towards creating safer facilities and environments in which we serve our youth. . If this bill passes there will be no alternative or active model for our facilities to appropriately address situations when youth become a danger to themselves or others and we have exhausted all other safety measures. . Through recent conversations with Commissioner Schnell, it is MNJDA's understanding that DOC is prepared to work with MNJDA to work towards a restructure of the current operating rule, Rule 2960. This restructure will include redefining use of room time and other measures that ensure we are providing the best opportunity for the youth to be safe and successful.

We are asking to share our voice in future discussions around this legislation. We have representatives of MNJDA that will testify and are eager to work collaboratively to find legislative language that protects youth, while keeping all parties safe. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mindy O'Brien
President



Deb Dayon
Vice President