



February 15, 2023

The Honorable Kelly Moller
Chair, House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: House File 1836

Representative Moller and Members:

I write in support of HF 1836, which provides funding to the Minnesota County Attorney's Association (MCAA) for prosecutor and law enforcement training.

Prosecutors are unique in the legal profession because of the additional legal and professional obligations that attach to their solemn role. "The primary duty of the prosecutor is to seek justice within the bounds of the law, not merely to convict. The prosecutor serves the public interest and should act with integrity and balanced judgment to increase public safety both by pursuing appropriate criminal charges of appropriate severity, and by exercising discretion to not pursue criminal charges in appropriate circumstances. The prosecutor should seek to protect the innocent and convict the guilty, consider the interests of victims and witnesses, and respect the constitutional and legal rights of all persons, including suspects and defendants." American Bar Association, Criminal Justice Standards for the Prosecution Function, Standard 3-1.2(b).

Effective training is essential to developing effective prosecutors, and the MCAA is the primary vehicle for training county attorneys in Minnesota. The MCAA provides training on a wide variety of criminal justice topics, including a trial school for new prosecutors. In fact, several of the prosecutors in this Office are alumni of the MCAA trial school. In addition to training prosecutors, the MCAA also has a variety of courses catering to law enforcement officers.

The high-quality training provided by MCAA has helped develop a deep and talented pool of prosecutors in Minnesota, including nationwide leadership in several areas. But creating training programs requires resources, and the MCAA should have a reliable funding source to enable it to continue to provide a high level of training. It should not have to rely on funding scraped together from individual counties, many of which regularly face their own budgeting challenges.



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Properly trained prosecutors and law enforcement officers benefits the entire criminal justice system and improves the quality of justice in Minnesota. Accordingly, I urge you to support HF 1836 to maintain a high level of training for Minnesota's prosecutors and law enforcement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keith Ellison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping tail.

Keith Ellison
Attorney General