

Please do all you can to pass the following much needed police reform bills. This is a public health emergency. As a medical provider at Hennepin Healthcare I see every day the tragic effects that our current police system has on the health and well-being of our community. Particularly for Black individuals in the Twin Cities, the abuses perpetrated by the police is having direct effects on the health, safety, and wellbeing of my patients, my co-workers, my friends, and myself. These bills are only the tip of the iceberg of the needed reimagining of what true peacekeeping could and should look like in Minnesota. Please do the right thing and support them.

HF1104 (Thompson)-- End qualified immunity for police officers. This bill would help survivors of brutality or harassment by law enforcement get relief in the courts. Police officers are protected from liability by a legal doctrine known as “qualified immunity.” In a nutshell, it raises the bar to extreme levels, where a person’s rights cannot be shown to have been violated unless there is a nearly identical case in precedent.

HF640 (Gomez)--Establish civilian oversight of police. Currently state law prohibits civilian oversight of police. This interferes with the ability to hold police accountable. HF640 restores civilian oversight power, and permits law enforcement agencies to put civilian oversight in place. [Note: Original bill requires it, but author is bringing an amendment to make it permissive rather than mandatory, to blunt opposition.]

HF1103 (Thompson) – Prohibits law enforcement from altering or destroying body camera footage of a deadly force incident, and requires law enforcement agencies to release body camera recordings of deadly force incidents to the deceased’s family and representatives within 48 hours of the incident.

I would be happy to talk more about these bills and the need for more substantial reimagining of our police system for the health and safety of our community.

Sincerely,
Catherine Justice
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