

**NATIONAL**  
**HARM REDUCTION**  
**COALITION**

May 1, 2023

Representative Kelly Moller, Chair  
Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee  
Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
479 State Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Senator Ron Latz, Chair  
Judiciary and Public Safety  
Minnesota State Senate  
3105 Minnesota Senate Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Moller and Chair Latz:

Thank you for the opportunity allowing the National Harm Reduction Coalition to weigh-in on specific legislation included in the House and Senate versions of the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Finance bills, SF2909.

The House version of the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Finance bill includes HF2041 (Gomez)/SF2261 (Oumou Verbeten), a bill that authorizes syringe services to possess, distribute, and dispose of syringes; and authorizes the hypodermic syringes and changes to the state statute related to drug paraphernalia (See House version, Article 16, Sections 1-6 and 13-15).

Decades of research demonstrate that criminal penalties for drug use and paraphernalia possession do nothing to reduce drug use and only exacerbate the overdose death epidemic. Tougher laws and sentences around drug paraphernalia result in more death, preventable disease transmission, and create greater risks when individuals seek drugs and drug paraphernalia in the illicit market, particularly impacting low-income people and communities of color. These drug paraphernalia laws also threaten to punish non-users involved in harm reduction activities.

This legislation will allow syringe services providers to operate under and within defined parameters as well as decriminalizing drug paraphernalia and residues contained therein. These changes will reduce harm and save lives of Minnesotans and we urge the Conference Committee members to support the inclusion of HF2041.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the Conference Committee.

Sincerely,



Mary Sylla, JD, MPH  
Director of Overdose Prevention Policy & Strategy

Cc: Rep. Jamie Becker-Finn  
Rep. Sandra Feist  
Rep. Cedrick Frazier  
Rep. Brion Curran  
Sen. Clare Oumou Verbeten  
Sen. Sandra Pappas  
Sen. Judy Seeberger  
Sen. Bonnie Westlin