

April 26, 2023

Re: Support for Restorative Practices Office and Grants inclusion in Final Public Safety / Judiciary Budget (HF2890/SF2909)

Dear Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives:

We write to strongly urge inclusion of funding and grants to launch the Office of Restorative Practices in the final Public Safety/Judiciary Budget Bill. This is exactly the type of proactive, evidence-based, effective approach to youth justice that Minnesota desperately needs. This Office will encourage and support restorative practices that have been demonstrated to dramatically reduce out of home placement, provide greater solace for those harmed, ensure meaningful accountability for youth, and enhance public safety.

The Office of Restorative Practices will provide structure around building the capacity to use restorative practices and administer a grant program and provide technical assistance and oversight. These practices are effective in reducing recidivism, as demonstrated by the great success of Colorado's restorative justice legislation. In one study, the legislation reduced recidivism from 30% down to 8.8%. In addition, it is preferred by wide margins by those harmed by crime. In one nationwide study, 94% of these individuals recommended restorative justice, as compared to 24% of those who participated in traditional sentencing. It is also cost-effective. In Yellow Medicine County, out-of-home placement costs were reduced by 85% annually in the decade following initiation of restorative practices in 2000. These costs remain nominal due to the success of the county's Restorative Justice Department.

Given the research on the effectiveness of restorative justice approaches for youth, in addition to the large disparities in placements of children of color in Minnesota, it is in the state's interest to encourage the use of restorative practices throughout the state. We have seen the effectiveness of these programs in other states that have implemented statewide restorative justice initiatives, such as Colorado. We have also seen the successes of restorative practices in communities across Minnesota, including 17 geographically dispersed counties, such as Yellow Medicine County, Pine County, Ramsey County, and Hennepin County.

We have a crisis in Minnesota when it comes to youth involved in our criminal legal systems. Our answer cannot be exclusively reactive. Minnesota needs an Office of Restorative Practices that is empowered to provide guidance, resources, and technical assistance to communities statewide seeking to expand restorative justice.

We, the undersigned, urge support for this important initiative in the final Public Safety / Judiciary Budget.

Sincerely,

Minnesota Board of Public Defense	Minneapolis Police Department	Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties (MACCAC)
St. Paul Police Department	Violence Free MN	MnCASA
Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA)	Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD)	Women's Foundation
Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA)	OutFront MN	Minneapolis NAACP

Youth Intervention Programs Association (YIPA)	Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP)	National Council of Jewish Women Minnesota
Northeast Metro Intermediate School District 916	EdAllies	Legal Rights Center
Neighborhood Justice Center	Great North Innocence Project	NAMI Minnesota
John Choi, Ramsey County Attorney	Reese Frederickson, Pine County Attorney	Mary Moriarty, Hennepin County Attorney
Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey	St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter	Pete Lee, Retired Colorado State Senator, Former Chair, Colorado Senate Judiciary Committee
New Brighton Mayor Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas	Dr. Renee Corneille, Superintendent, St. Anthony – New Brighton School District	Janet Krueger Assistant Public Defender, Third Judicial District, Olmsted County
Janet Krueger Assistant Public Defender, Third Judicial District, Olmsted County	Amanda Weitekamp Assistant Public Defender St. Paul, MN	Jen Westmoreland, Hopkins School Board Chair
Kelly O'Rourke Minneapolis Police Violent Crime Division (Robbery), Manager of Metro-Wide Carjacking Taskforce	Missi Dikken WoMen's Rural Advocacy Programs, Inc. (WRAP), Domestic Violence Advocate, Yellow Medicine County	Terry Fawcett Pine County Probation Director / Director of Restorative Justice / Juvenile Diversion
Sharon Hendrichs Restorative Justice Coordinator and Founder, Yellow Medicine County Restorative Justice Department	Teresa Kuehl Child Protection Worker, Yellow Medicine County Family Services	Dawn Odegard Career Corrections Agent, 6W Community Corrections, Yellow Medicine County
Kathy Anderson Retired Assistant County Attorney - Olmsted County Board Member, Three Rivers Restorative Justice	Midge Christianson Director 6W Community Corrections Montevideo, MN	
Nekima Levy Armstrong, Executive Director, Wayfinder Foundation	Chauntyll Allen, Director of Criminal Justice Policy and Activism Wayfinder Foundation/School Board Member	Marci Exsted, MSW, LGSW (She/Her/Hers), Center for Social Justice Research Associate Urban League Twin Cities
Mitzi Hobot, Executive Director, CornerHouse, Minneapolis, MN	Tracie Clanaugh, Executive Director, First Witness, Child Advocacy Center, Duluth, MN	Myon Burrell, Wayfinder Foundation - Prison Advocacy Project

Satara Strong Allen, Love First Community Engagement - Executive Director	Demetria Carter, community activist focused on racial justice, faith, and youth	Naciima Mohamed, Senior, Columbia Heights High School
Rev. Jenny Cannon, Lead Pastor, Christ United Methodist Church, Rochester, Olmstead County	Rev. Kendall Hughes, D. Min., Chair, Three Rivers Restorative Justice, Federal Prison Chaplain, Retired	Rev. Nancy Wheeler Handlon, Minister for Congregational Care, Christ United Methodist Church
Mary Vlazny, Director of Social Action, Co-Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Rochester, MN	Peggy Menzel, Co-Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Rochester, MN	Carol Cousins, CMC Consulting, Restorative Practices
Rev. Fr. Bernie Lattner Federal BOP Chaplain DCSO Chaplain	Rev. Karen K. Heistand, Program Director of Clinical Pastoral Education, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN	Rev. Debra Jene Collum, Chatfield United Methodist Church, Chatfield, MN
Richard Estry Treasurer, Christ United Methodist Church Rochester, MN		
Professor Raj Sejurathu, Minneapolis NAACP and Metro State University, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice	Kara J. Beckman, MA, Senior Evaluator, Healthy Youth Development * Prevention Research Center, Department of Pediatrics, University of Minnesota Medical School	Amanda Sieling, Assistant Professor, Justice Administration, Southwest Minnesota State University
Ted Lewis, Restorative Justice Consultant and Trainer, Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking, University of Minnesota-Duluth	Dr. Emily Gaarder, Director, Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking, University of Minnesota Duluth, St. Louis County	Hank Shea, Sr. Distinguished Fellow, University of St. Thomas School of Law
Rev. Daniel Griffith Founding Director, Initiative on Restorative Justice and Healing, University of St. Thomas School of Law & Pastor and Rector, Basilica of St. Mary	Julie H. Craven Associate Director Initiative on Restorative Justice and Healing at the University of St. Thomas School of Law	Jillian Peterson, Ph.D. and James Densley, Ph.D., Co-Founders, The Violence Prevention Project Research Center
Richard D. Gillis, Three Rivers Restorative Justice, Rochester, MN	Don Baldus Three Rivers Restorative Justice, Mazeppa, MN	Kurt A. Kennel, Three Rivers Restorative Justice, Rochester, MN
Michele Braley, Executive Director of Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice	George Romano, Volunteer for Three Rivers Restorative Justice, Rochester MN	Toni Kay Mangskau Three Rivers Restorative Justice Volunteer Rochester, MN

Teresa L Anderson Facilitator, Three Rivers Restorative Justice Rochester, MN	Renaux Swancutt, LGSW, Program Manager, Three Rivers Restorative Justice Rochester, MN	Robert and Margaret Hake, Rochester, MN
Michael J Burns, Rochester, MN	Mary Elizabeth "Beth" Kosta Rochester, MN	Sally Burns, Rochester, MN
Cesar Bravo Wolfe, Rochester, MN	Laura Martin, Rochester, MN	Isaac Landsteiner, North Mankato, MN
Jane Kelley Rodeheffer, Ph.D., Rochester, MN	Aleta Borrud, MD MPH, Rochester, MN	Jane Iddings and Ken Normington, Rochester, MN
Tish Torchia Next Chapter Ministries, Rochester, MN, The Redemption Project	Tim Haskamp Retired Social Worker Facilitator, Three Rivers Restorative Justice Rochester, MN	