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Dear Chair Mariani and Members of the House Public Safety Committee,

The ACLU of Minnesota submits this letter in support of HF1162, which establishes a task force to examine sentencing for aiding and abetting felony murder.

While intended to enhance public safety, laws establishing criminal liability for aiding and abetting felony murder may have unintended and/or disproportionate consequences. Mass incarceration in the United States and in Minnesota has in large part been driven by the expansion of criminalization throughout the U.S. legal system.

Any law that criminalizes conduct subjects people to the potential for the state to restrict their liberty, and ideally should be scrutinized before enactment. Existing laws such as aiding and abetting felony murder, which can criminalize conduct far beyond and only tenuously connected to a felony offense should be examined sooner rather than later for equity, proportionality, and effect on public safety of all Minnesotans.

The ACLU of Minnesota supports HF1162 as a first step towards comprehensive and transformative reforms of not only felony murder laws, but inequitable and disproportionate criminal laws throughout Minnesota's legal system.

Sincerely,

Julia Decker
Policy Director
ACLU-MN