



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

March 7, 2023

Dear Madam Chair and Committee:

Founded in 1985, the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) is a non-profit organization that is headquartered in Minnesota and has operations in the U.S., Africa and the Middle East. We extend rehabilitative care to survivors of torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (CIDT); build the capacity of colleague torture rehabilitation programs and human rights defenders worldwide; and engage in advocacy aimed at ending torture and CIDT and supporting the rehabilitation of survivors.

Our Healing, Incarceration, and Policing Program advocates for legislation that uplifts and supports our clients and communities in Minnesota, while increasing equity and accountability in our public safety infrastructure. Over the past year, we have advocated for the Minnesota POST Board to make changes to rules and regulations for peace officers. We educated the public on these issues and submitted public commentary to the POST Board twice, encouraging the body to implement greater rules against extremists, white supremacist, and/or hate group participation. We therefore support HF 538, and hope to see this basic standard for police officers codified in Minnesota law. I have included an excerpt from the commentary CVT submitted to the POST Board late last year. I encourage you to consider these points, when making your decision.

1. "Involvement in a hate group interferes with an officer's duties by contributing to conscious bias and undermining the integrity of law enforcement activities.
2. Involvement in a hate group has a serious and deleterious impact on community trust, which is fundamental to protecting and serving the public.
3. Involvement in a hate group can lead to the mishandling of evidence, property, witnesses, or suspects. It can also result in Brady-Giglio impairments (Brady-Giglio requires that prosecutors disclose evidence that may lead to the impeachment of law enforcement officers, including findings or allegations of bias towards individuals or groups). All of these can impact investigations, trials, and convictions; draw an officer's credibility into question; and limit a prosecutor's ability to rely on an officer for testimony or evidence in criminal cases.
4. Without this rule, officers connected to white supremacy or hate/extremist groups will continue to serve communities comprised of non-white people, of various nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religions. It is reckless and irresponsible to support and allow police officers with oppressive mindsets and weapons, to be active in communities occupied by the people their hate is aimed at.

In support of MN HF 538: Peace Officer Standards
and Training Board required to revise standards of conduct for peace officers

5. White supremacists are a threat to our state and our communities. We cannot allow them to have state sanctioned power.
 - a. FBI reports and recent congressional hearings have identified white supremacist groups as infiltrating law enforcement.
 - b. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security identifies white supremacist extremists as the most persistent and lethal threat among domestic violence extremists in the U.S.
 - c. White supremacist activity in Minnesota exceeds any other type of hate activity, as reported by ADL, which monitors antisemitism and bias nationwide”.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

On behalf of CVT:

Ta'Mara Hill, Policy Officer
Healing, Incarceration, and Policing Program

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