



March 17, 2025

Dear Members of the Public Safety Committee,

My name is Damon Drake and I serve as Executive Director of We Resolve, the Twin Cities Participatory Defense Hub. **I urge you to SUPPORT Pretrial Data Bill (HF 1775 / SF 1908)**, a bill to mandate that Minnesota counties annually collect and report pretrial data. Data is urgently needed in order to have a true picture of pretrial practices and trends across the state of MN. Data will allow for recommendations to be created to improve statewide bail and pretrial practices. Justice and fairness should be uniform across the state of MN.

We Resolve is a local nonprofit and was founded in order to support people and their loved ones as a defendant travels through the pretrial system. In our work, we hear and witness daily how the system is currently operating with so many discrepancies. Our organization stands with and supports loved ones, their families, and their communities as they go through the criminal legal process. We Resolve's model is designed to give a voice to, humanize, and support those whose voices are most often silenced. We hope to mitigate the harm that the criminal justice system has on the individual, family, and the community as a whole. Harm can occur due to lack of information and MN needs pretrial data to reduce systemic harms, where they may be occurring. The Participatory Defense Model that we use to do our work is based on the idea that more information adds to a more humane, fair and justice process. Our organization uses this model and we hope pretrial data will also be used to create a more humane, fair and justice system.

Here is the problem. In Minnesota each year, over 69,000 Minnesotans are booked into our county jails. Many are held there because they are unable to afford bail money in a country that promises we are "innocent until proven guilty." These men and women are disproportionately Black, brown and Indigenous persons, according to the Vera Institute. And, the cost of incarcerating our citizens, whose guilt has yet to be determined, costs our taxpayers a ridiculous amount of money daily, with no benefit to public safety.

Minnesotans deserve transparency and accountability from the pretrial system. But right now, it is practically impossible for lawmakers or the public to access county-by-county data that would provide

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Tipping the Scales Toward
Community Healing

a clear and complete picture of pretrial practices in our state. This lack of transparency prevents lawmakers from identifying and addressing systemic harms, and it removes a critical check against public disinformation about the pretrial system.

Please support the Pretrial Data Bill (HF 1775 / SF 1908).

Sincerely,

Damon Drake
Executive Director
We Resolve