

To the House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee:

I am writing in support of HF1103 and HF1104. These bills are important to me. I have a four-year-old daughter. I don't know how to explain to her why Black Minnesotans keep getting killed by police. I don't know how to explain to her why there are rarely consequences for the police committing this violence.

My daughter: "Mom, why do the police kill Black people?"

Me: "I don't know, honey, what do you think?"

My daughter: "Maybe they think they're bears?"

This is the thinking of a four-year-old who understands that Black people have been dehumanized to such an extent that they are constantly under threat of death.

Lots of parent friends and I talk about this regularly. We ask each other questions like: "Is it okay to cry in front of my child when talking about police violence, or should I hold it in?"

I get text messages from friends across the country and internationally as well asking me what's going on with the police in Minnesota. Black people in Minnesota walk around every day unprotected and vulnerable to police violence. How can we all live with that?

I saw a police car on the street when I was driving home last weekend. This was before Daunte Wright. Did I feel safer seeing law enforcement on the street? No. I felt scared.

HF1104 would make police officers liable to an injured party, so there would be both civil liability and criminal liability. Police officers rarely face criminal charges or even internal disciplinary measures. When violence and misconduct goes unchecked, officers continue to abuse their power. I'm begging you: hold the police accountable for their behavior.

I read an article about Representative Thompson in the Star Tribune recently where he described the way the law enforcement community has critiqued these bills, asking him why he's trying to make their jobs harder. Representative Thompson's response:

"Why do you keep making my job hard? All I want to be is be a Black man in this state."

Can we please let Black Minnesotans live in peace? I am ashamed of our state and I'm scared of the police. My child is scared of the police. Every family I know is scared of the police. If there are good officers, they will welcome these accountability measures that will bring some honor back to their profession.

Elianna Lippold-Johnson

Minneapolis, Minnesota