



Dear Co-Chairs Novotny and Moller, and Members of the Committee,

Violence Free Minnesota, the coalition to end relationship abuse, writes today in concern about HF 3496. Our coalition represents over 90 member programs providing direct services to victim/survivors of domestic and sexual violence in every county in the state. This bill would prevent a person from receiving supervision abatement under the MRRA if that person still owes restitution. As crime victims' advocates, we support restitution as one way of making a survivor whole. However, we have two concerns with HF 3496: first, this bill conditions supervision abatement status on something other than public safety; second, this bill does not incorporate any ability to pay analysis.

The goal of the MRRA is to incentivize behavior that leads to safer, more productive outcomes for justice-impacted individuals. The commissioner of corrections is specifically given the following test in Minn. Stat. 244.46 subd. 1(b) when considering whether or not to grant supervision abatement: "The commissioner must not place the individual on supervision abatement status for the remainder of the supervised or conditional release term if the commissioner determines that doing so would present a risk to public safety, after weighing factors including the individual's stability, behavior, or overall adjustment while on supervision." These factors all focus on public safety. As anti-violence advocates, it is our first duty to ensure we are maximizing community safety. We believe that keeping a public safety-based analysis, and ensuring that decisions on the level of required supervision are made with only safety in mind, is the best path forward.

This bill would lead to unequal outcomes where people on supervised release with access to wealth and resources would be able to get to supervision abatement status, whereas people who have behaved in the exact same manner but who do not have access to wealth and resources have to remain on supervision. We encourage the enforcement of restitution when payment is possible, but payment is not always possible.

Clear, consistent, and well-enforced restitution recovery systems are important to crime victims in Minnesota and we encourage efforts to ensure victims and survivors can be supported after being harmed. However, without incorporating an ability to pay analysis in a restitution repayment provision, withholding supervision abatement is neither just nor equitable. We ask you to oppose HF3496.

Thank you,
Katie Kramer and Nikki Engel
Co-Executive Directors
Violence Free Minnesota