



April 6, 2021

Representative Carlos Mariani
Chair, Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy
479 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
559 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Mariani and Members of the Committee:

The Minnesota Prenatal to Three (PN-3) Coalition is writing in support of the Healthy Start Act, HF 1403/SF 1315. The Healthy Start Act provides specialized programming for pregnant and parenting women during the first year of life. We know women in prison tend to be younger, have completed less education and more likely to have experienced physical or chemical abuse. Moving women and their children from traditional prison settings to community alternative settings can improve birth outcomes for Mom and baby. Allowing parents to bond during the first year of life can improve the health outcomes for children during this first year and for the remainder of their lives.

We were pleased to see the bill language and funding included in HF 1078. We believe this policy change and funding helps address several inequities that impact justice involved children and families.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding our support and and/or request for additional action, please contact our Policy and Legislative Affairs Director, Deb Fitzpatrick at dfitzpatrick@childrensdefense.org or Coalition Coordinator, Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn at laura@lacroixdalluhnconsulting.com.

Thank you,

Bharti Wahli,
Children's Defense Fund
Co-Chair

Nancy Jost,
West Central Initiative
Co-Chair