



OFFICE OF THE HENNEPIN COUNTY ATTORNEY

MICHAEL O. FREEMAN COUNTY ATTORNEY

March 3, 2021

RE: HF901

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to express my support for House File 901, the Prosecutor-Initiated Sentence Adjustment bill. Prosecutors are ministers of justice, and it is not the job of the prosecutor to obtain the harshest and most severe punishment in every case. Our prosecutors do an excellent job in each case to obtain a sentence that is appropriate given the circumstances. There may be times, however, when the benefit of time tells us that a particular sentence is no longer appropriate, or when exceptional circumstances exist that are impossible to foresee at the moment of sentencing. For example, there is no purpose in keeping a very elderly person incarcerated in prison if they have been rehabilitated or no longer face a public safety threat. No existing process currently exists to address these narrow categories of cases.

HF901 allows prosecutors complete discretion in using this legislation. If requests for sentence adjustments appear frivolous or meritless, there is not even a requirement to respond. The bill would require that we contact victims for input on a possible sentence adjustment.

As the former President of the National District Attorneys Association, I have had the opportunity to reach out to my counterparts in California, where this law is already in effect. They have indicated that the ability to adjust sentences is invaluable in achieving justice. I encourage you to provide us this same opportunity.

Very respectfully yours,

MICHAEL O. FREEMAN
Hennepin County Attorney