



A LAW FIRM OF AND FOR THE PEOPLE

In Support of HF 1775

March 16, 2025

Dear Chair Moller and Members of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee,

The Legal Rights Center submits this letter in strong support of HF1775, which would dramatically increase criminal legal system transparency and support evaluation of current pretrial practices in Minnesota.

As one of four nonprofit public defense corporations in Minnesota, the Legal Rights Center annually represents hundreds of indigent Minnesotans facing criminal charges. Through this work, our attorneys see firsthand how the pretrial period of a criminal case can affect the outcome of that case. We know that clients who are detained pretrial are seriously limited in their ability to assist in their own defense. We see the way that pretrial detention or severe pretrial conditions can exert pressure on a person to plead guilty when they otherwise would maintain their innocence. And we understand that the race, income, and primary language of our clients impacts how they are perceived at bail hearings and the types of pretrial conditions that are imposed on them.

We know all of this because we work within the criminal legal system every day. But the system as a whole lacks transparency around pretrial issues. HF1775 will enable actors within and outside of the system to understand how the pretrial process works, its impacts on our communities, and what needs to change to achieve true equity and justice. Minnesotans deserve to know whether their legal system is working for them. For these reasons, the Legal Rights Center is proud to support HF1775.

Sincerely,

Malaika Eban

Executive Director