



STATE OF MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER, LARRY HERKE



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February 26, 2020

House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Division  
563 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Veterans Restorative Justice Act (H.F. 998/S.F. 1153)

Thank you for the opportunity to express support for House File 998, the Veterans Restorative Justice Act (VRJA). As Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, it is my goal to ensure that all Veterans in the State of Minnesota are provided the benefits, services and support that they have earned, regardless of their status or situation.

Going back to the Vietnam War, and through nearly 20 years of continuous conflict in the Global War on Terror, many members of our Armed Forces have experienced trauma as a result of their service. Sometimes, Veterans struggle in their return to civilian life but are unwilling to acknowledge their struggles or ask for help. For some, these struggles lead to harmful & illegal activities and ultimately, criminal offenses.

Where a Veteran can demonstrate that their actions are the result of service-related trauma, the VRJA would enable the criminal justice system to offer that Veteran a choice; instead of an immediate sentence to jail or prison with their guilty plea, they get a chance to benefit from the treatment and services available to Veterans.

The VRJA offers Veterans the chance to heal and succeed at reintegrating with their family and community. I ask you to support this important legislation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry J. Herke", is written over a faint circular stamp.

Larry J. Herke, Commissioner  
Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

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