



MINNEAPOLIS AMERICAN INDIAN CENTER

1530 East Franklin Avenue * Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404

Phone: (612) 871-4555 or 879-1700 * Fax: (612) 879-1795

Website: www.maicnet.org

February 27, 2023

To Members of the Minnesota State House of Representatives:

I am writing in support of HF 1712, a bill for an act relating to public safety; appropriating money for prevention services, intervention services, and barrier reduction services relating to youth involved or at risk of becoming involved in the criminal or juvenile justice system.

For more than thirty (30) years, the Minneapolis American Indian Center's Youth Services Program has provided prevention services for urban youth. Our Youth Services includes a Boys & Girls Club through the Native Services division of the National Boys & Girls Club, a resiliency building curriculum for school age youth through the Ginew/Golden Eagle Project, American Indian cultural activities, teachings and events, as well as educational support through tutoring, and health and wellness activities. We provide support to the families of the youth through resource and referrals to internal Minneapolis American Indian Center programs, as well as external sources.

The needs of our young people cannot be overlooked. They have seen violence in the community, they have seen the devastation that drugs and overdoses has had in their community, and they have seen encampments of those unsheltered. Our youth shouldn't have to know what to do when gunfire erupts on their playground, nor should they know how to administer naran, but many do. Our young people are resilient, and programs such as those through the Youth Intervention Program (YIP) meet youth where they are and provide the support and guidance to help young people succeed.

Increased funding through HF1712 would assist in increasing our capacity to serve more of our urban youth, as well as increased training for our staff to ensure that our program maintains quality services. The Minneapolis American Indian Center will complete a renovation and expansion of the facility by spring of 2024. Our Youth Services Program will be expanded to include a new Best Buy Teen Tech Center. I ask that you fully support HF1712. It is programs such as YIP that are vital for our youth, not only in the urban areas, but throughout the state of Minnesota.

Miigwech/Thank you,

Mary LaGarde
Executive Director