



January 31, 2022

Representative Cedrick Frazier
439 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Subject: H.F. 2724 (Frazier)

Dear Representative Frazier,

The League of Minnesota Cities is in the process of reviewing H.F. 2724, your bill that will be heard this week in the House Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy Committee. While we have not had time to vet the provisions with our 837 members, we would like to offer some comments on specific provisions contained in the bill.

Article 1

The League is generally supportive of the policy and funding provisions contained in this article. Specifically, the League supports community-based efforts designed to enhance community safety and wellness as well as homelessness assistance programs.

The League would appreciate you considering and addressing the disparities in mental health services throughout the state, specifically the pronounced shortages of service providers in rural areas. The League has convened the Public Safety Mental Health Crisis Response Stakeholder Group to work on solutions to this challenge, and we would welcome the opportunity to share what the group has learned.

Article 2

The League is supportive of local community policing grants. The League requests that this article be expanded to include additional components of community policing beyond increasing foot patrols.

The League also supports programs and funding aimed at improving recruitment and retention of police officers. We would strongly encourage you to add measures aimed at improving officer wellness, particularly mental wellness, to this article. The League is working on another bill that will contain proposals to increase prevention, treatment and funding for local costs associated with a sharp increase in public safety duty disability claims.

Body camera provisions

Articles 2 and 3 pertain to body camera grants and policies. The League recommends increasing the amount appropriated in the bill so more agencies can benefit from the grant program. Unfortunately, the grant requirements as currently drafted would prohibit usage of these funds. Most of our concerns are likely inadvertent consequences. For example, the prohibition on redaction – which could be considered “altering” in the bill language. Redaction is needed for a variety of important reasons, such as ensuring protection of the identities of confidential informants. Also, another proposed change is to keep body cameras “activated during all contacts with citizens” but there are concerns in sensitive situations, such as taking victim statements who may not want their identity made public.

As related to data practices, the League would encourage that any proposed changes be done balancing the three important foundational values of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act: (1) the public’s right to know what its government is doing, (2) the right of individual’s privacy, and (3) the government’s need to function responsibly and efficiently.

Article 3

The League has concerns about the provision in section 1 that states “A person does not need to be convicted of a crime for the board to take licensure action under paragraph (a).” This provision currently exists in rules and is a subject of discussion in rulemaking revisions. The League believes this subject should remain in rules.

Local units of government currently have authority to implement civilian review boards, and the League supports the current law. The League has concerns about making a the civilian review board an investigatory body with subpoena power and disciplinary authority because it would replicate existing steps governed by other jurisdictions. The League believes changing the arbitration system to include a modified standard of review and an administrative law judge model for certain disciplinary cases would more effectively improve oversight and accountability.

The League supports establishment of the Task Force on Alternative Courses to Peace Officer Licensure. The League respectfully requests being named as an appointing entity to the task force, thereby having representation.

The League supports funding for Peace Officer Standards and Training Board investigators and is neutral on funding for the Task Force on Alternative Courses to Peace Officer Licensure.

As your bill moves through the legislative process, the League of Minnesota Cities would appreciate being informed of potential changes and given the opportunity to inform the final product.

Sincerely,



Anne Finn
Assistant Intergovernmental Relations Director