



MINNESOTA CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION

DEDICATED TO THE IDEALS OF PROFESSIONAL POLICING

February 2, 2023

Re: Support of House File 14 and House File 15

Dear Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives:

On behalf of more than 300 active police chiefs and another 150-command staff at agencies across the state, the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association, writes this letter in support of House Files 14 and 15.

Our association has long been committed to keeping our residents and law enforcement officers safe from the threat of gun violence. At the same time, we also value, uphold and promote the rights of responsible gun owners to lawfully possess firearms.

Our current laws in Minnesota need updating to improve consistent review and application. Public safety demands we make progress with three core principles:

1. Careful and prudent policies to remedy the availability of handgun purchases between private and internet sales that currently occur without a background check. We support legislation that would require all purchasers of handguns and semi-automatic military-style assault weapons to undergo a criminal background check, removing the current exemptions for private and internet sales.

2. A straightforward regulatory framework that allows law enforcement entities to conduct thorough background checks but also ensures ease of use by the public. We support using the existing permit statutory framework, the current age requirement for firearms purchases and the timelines in the bill for law enforcement to implement expanded use of criminal background checks.

3. Additional capabilities for chief law enforcement officers to address serious mental health episodes by limiting access to firearms. We support broader discretion for chiefs and sheriffs to deny a transfer or a permit request to an individual who is deemed a danger to themselves or others.

The Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association also believes law enforcement needs greater discretion to temporarily remove weapons from individuals who are a clear danger to themselves and others.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders focus on the relative rare, yet often tragic circumstances where mental illness escalates to dangerous behavior. These orders will allow law enforcement, or families, to ask a judge to temporarily restrict people from having guns when there is substantial evidence that they pose a significant danger to themselves or others by possessing a firearm.

Family members and law enforcement are often the first to see the warning signs, and we believe the issuance of a temporary Extreme Risk Protection Order is a simple, reasonable solution to address legitimate safety concerns. We also feel that these orders would be a considerably softer and a much more effective intervention strategy than a civil commitment to keep individuals and others safe during periods of crisis.

The Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association is committed to supporting important changes to our gun laws that will make our communities safer for generations to come. That's why we support House Files 14 and 15.

Thank you for your efforts on this important public safety issue. We look forward to working with you this session.



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