



March 17, 2025

RE: Support for the Pretrial Data Transparency Act (HF 1775 / SF 1908)

Dear Chair and Members of the Public Safety Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the **Pretrial Data Transparency Act (HF 1775 / SF 1908)**. As a member of Regional Native Public Defense Corporation in Northern Minnesota for the past 11 years, I have seen firsthand how the pretrial system affects individuals, families, and communities. This bill is a crucial step toward ensuring Minnesota collects and shares essential pretrial data so we can better understand and improve the system.

Why This Bill Matters

Currently, Minnesota lacks a consistent way to track key pretrial data, such as who is being held in jail before trial, how bail is determined, and how these decisions affect case outcomes. Without this information, it is difficult to make informed and fair policy choices. This bill would require tracking and reporting data such as:

- The number of individuals held in jail before trial.
- Bail amounts set and whether individuals can afford them.
- The impact of bail decisions on the length of pretrial detention.
- How pretrial detention influences plea decisions.

Making this data publicly available will help identify unfair practices and guide meaningful reforms.

Creating a Fairer and More Transparent Pretrial System

Bail decisions vary widely between counties, and too often, people remain in jail simply because they cannot afford to pay. This disproportionately impacts Native and low-income communities. Collecting and analyzing pretrial data will allow us to:

- Identify disparities and inconsistencies in pretrial decisions.

- Reduce unnecessary jail time while maintaining community safety.
- Help lawmakers implement fairer, more effective policies.

Conclusion

The Pretrial Data Transparency Act is necessary for a fairer and more accountable pretrial system in Minnesota. By ensuring that critical pretrial data is collected, analyzed, and made available to the public, the bill empowers legislators and stakeholders to advocate for meaningful reforms that balance public safety with justice and equity.

Thank you for your time and leadership. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



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