



MINNESOTA POLICE AND PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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January 24, 2023

To: Representative Jon Koznick
Chair Kelly Moller
Lead Paul Novotny
Members of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee

RE: Support of HF506 (Koznick), Equine therapy provided for first responders, and money appropriated.

The Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association (MPPOA) is the largest association representing public safety professionals in the State of Minnesota.

MPPOA supports HF506, legislation that will provide funding to Abijah's on the Backside to provide equine experiential mental health therapy to first responders suffering from job-related trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder.

While an unlikely pairing, this legislation brings together off-track thoroughbreds and first responders suffering mental health issues and gives both a second chance. Horses that have run their last race can have a second career providing much needed therapy to first responders suffering from addiction, depression, substance abuse, anxiety, and other mental health challenges.

This is a first of its kind program, spearheaded by Canterbury Park, and gives sustainability to the racehorse industry and importantly, provides an additional outlet for mental health services to those Minnesotans who have served their communities on the frontlines. We urge the Legislature to prioritize funding for equine experiential mental health therapy and hope it serves as a model for the future expansion of similar programs in our region and across the country.

Sincerely,

Brian Peters
Executive Director
Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association



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