



March 4, 2026

Rep. Ginny Klevorn, Co-Chair
State Government Finance & Policy Committee
Centennial Building, 5th Floor
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Jim Nash, Co-Chair
State Government Finance & Policy Committee
Centennial Building, 2nd Floor
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chairs Klevorn and Nash:

On behalf of the Justice Action Network, a national bipartisan organization dedicated to advancing smarter justice policies that improve public safety outcomes and create stronger communities nationwide, which has advocated for evidence-based criminal justice reforms in Minnesota since 2016, we write to express our support of HF3477 (Long). This bill represent a critical step forward in ensuring that the constitutional rights of all Minnesotans are protected by providing a clear, legal mechanism for accountability when those rights are violated by those acting under color of law.

Police and government accountability is a non-partisan issue. It is a fundamental principle of our democracy that no one—regardless of the position they hold or the uniform they wear—is above the law. Accountability is essential to build public trust, ensure constitutional policing, and prevent abuses of power such as misconduct or excessive force. Without a practical mechanism for recourse, even the most well-intentioned reforms remain ineffective. If there is no recourse for misconduct, the standards you set as a state become mere suggestions rather than requirements.

This bill is a necessary tool to foster a culture of integrity within our institutions. When a person's rights are violated by those entrusted with public power, they deserve a meaningful path to seek justice and repair, and most Americans agree the law should provide it. Accountability is not an abstract principle—it is a safeguard for individuals and families who bear the real-world consequences of unconstitutional actions. Attached is a sampling of writing from different groups, spanning a broad ideological spectrum, explaining their support for measures that would allow such accountability. Recent events have shown that Minnesotans need protection from all levels of government overreach and unconstitutional actions.

This bill is not anti-law enforcement, it is pro-Minnesotans. We know that effective law enforcement is an important part of keeping our communities safe. This bill ensures that the rights guaranteed to us on paper are enforceable in practice, and that individual bad actors will be held responsible for the harm they cause. By passing this legislation, Minnesota can lead the way in affirming that our state stands by the principle of equal justice. I encourage you to support SF3628 and SF 3629 and work toward their passage.

Respectfully,

Estrella López, Senior State Policy Manager
Justice Action Network

C: Members of the House State Government Finance and Policy Committee
Rep. Jamie Long



WHAT NATIONAL GROUPS ARE SAYING ABOUT POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

American Civil Liberties Union

The ACLU is a non-partisan nonprofit that defends and preserves individual rights and liberties guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and laws, working through litigation, advocacy, and public education to protect freedoms like speech, privacy, equality, and due process for all people

"Police are supposed to protect and serve all members of the public. Performing this job effectively does not require sacrificing civil liberties, something that happens too often to BIPOC communities, even leading to killings by police. All Minnesota law enforcement agencies - from the state patrol to city police forces - need to respect the rights of individuals while enforcing the law. And when allegations of police misconduct arise, there must be policies and mechanisms to hold police accountable for their actions."

Cato Institute

The Cato Institute is a nonpartisan, independent research organization that describes its core values as supporting "individual liberty, limited government, free markets, and peace." As a 501(c)3 the Cato Institute has a policy of not taking an official position for or against any piece of legislation, but they have written extensively on the topic of the importance of police accountability, and specifically why it is necessary that for there be a state cause of action so victims of misconduct have a recourse for being made whole. Below is a sampling of their writing on the matter.

"[P]olice cannot do their jobs effectively without the trust and support of the communities they serve. But public confidence in police is at an all time low, and that seriously impairs their ability to do the most important part of their jobs, which is not handing out traffic tickets, resolving domestic disputes, or making misdemeanor arrests for rinky-dink crimes like low-level drug possession, but keeping our neighborhoods safe from violence and theft."

"[E]ven the most well-intentioned, seemingly relevant policing reforms—like changes to use-of-force standards or duties to intervene—will mean little if officers can continue to violate those laws with impunity. Robust civil accountability is an essential component of true policing reform..."

"According to research from the Cato Institute and Pew Research Center, 63–66 percent of Americans now support repealing the doctrine [of qualified immunity] so that citizens can sue police for wrongful misconduct."

American Enterprise Institute

The American Enterprise Institute is a public policy think tank dedicated to defending human dignity, expanding human potential, and building a freer and safer world. Their guiding principles are the defense of democracy, free enterprise, American strength and global leadership, solidarity with those at the periphery of society, and a pluralistic, entrepreneurial culture.

"Until recently, interest in reining in qualified immunity was growing in both parties. Supreme Court justices Clarence Thomas and Sonia Sotomayor have both expressed skepticism about the current version of it. What we're seeing in Virginia, and elsewhere, is a good idea falling victim to partisan polarization... Reforming qualified immunity may ... allow victims of unconstitutional police conduct a real day in court instead of an impenetrable legal shield that too often protects officers from civil liability even where rights have clearly been violated."

R Street Institute

The R Street Institute is a center-right, pragmatic think tank that promotes free markets and limited, effective government through a philosophy of "real solutions" to complex policy problems. R Street Institute advances incremental, evidence-based reforms in areas like criminal justice, technology, and harm reduction.



“Despite frequent media narratives to the contrary, there is strong bipartisan support for accountable policing, including on-the-ground conservative and Republican support. At a recent meeting on criminal justice at this year’s Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Virginia, polling showed that 85 percent of Republican voters agreed with both supporting law enforcement and holding them accountable for excessive use of force.”

Right on Crime

Right On Crime is a conservative criminal justice reform initiative. It aims to gain support for reform by sharing research, mobilizing leaders, and raising public awareness.

“Conservative policing reform is about improving our policing functions of government. It is not anti-cop to hold our police accountable, but rather it is consistent with conservative scrutiny on government power. Seeking areas to make the police more effective and efficient while preserving, or in some case returning, our individual rights is consistent with conservative values and traditional respect for the law enforcement function and institution... If a police action is reprehensible, but also legal, then it is the fault of the breadth of discretionary behavior more than the police as an institution. If it is already illegal, then the police officer or agency responsible need to be held accountable.”

Council on Criminal Justice

The Council on Criminal Justice is an independent, nonpartisan think tank and member organization dedicated to advancing understanding of the criminal justice policy choices facing the nation and builds consensus for solutions that enhance safety and justice for all.

“It is essential in a democratic society that people who believe that their rights have been violated have the ability to seek remedy in a court of law. As such, individual police officers and the governmental agencies that employ them should be subject to liability. Liability also incentivizes agencies and officers to take adequate precautions to prevent such violations. Like all employers, policing agencies have a responsibility to ensure that their officers act in a manner that respects rights and minimizes risk of violations. A sound liability scheme would provide redress for victims, while also encouraging agencies to develop policies, practices, training, and discipline systems that ensure officers respect the constitutional rights of all community members. Under the existing system, none of this occurs.”

Major Cities Chiefs Association

The Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA) is a professional organization of police executives representing the largest cities in the United States and Canada. The mission of MCCA is to provide a forum for police executives from large population centers to address the challenges and issues of policing, to influence national and international policy that affects police services, to enhance the development of current and future police leaders, and to encourage and sponsor research that advances this mission.

“Officers who engage in conduct that is criminal must be held accountable—a failure to do so undermines the trust between law enforcement and the community that is critical to good policing.... [O]fficers who break the law or intentionally violate an individual’s constitutional rights should be held accountable civilly or criminally...”