

Dear Ways & Means Committee Members,

My name is Keith Knaeble and I am a Sentencing to Service Crew Leader for the MN Department of Corrections and employee of the state. We were told by the DOC not to speak out about STS possibly being cut from the budget. I cannot sit back and watch a program as important to the taxpayer and offenders and all of MN get cut. We need STS now more than ever in our state when the state and counties are trying to stretch their dollars to provide vital services. We help in providing those services with free offender labor and at the same time hold the offender accountable and teach them employable skills to help them get jobs. The county is already paying 75% of the cost to fund this program and the state only has to pay for 25%. I know you Legislators are being told by the DOC that the counties will just take over the programs to fund them but that isn't true. Most counties are in a pinch with their budgets and will discontinue the STS programs if the state doesn't continue to partner with them. Our STS program up north handles the entire recycling program in our area and if STS is cut, there will no longer be a recycle program in our county. The DOC keeps talking about warehousing problems with the prisoners but cutting STS will only add to that problem because that would flood our jails/prisons with even more offenders to house because when the offender works on the STS crew they are doing it instead of sitting in jail/prison and that is one of the main purposes of STS...to create jail/prison space. STS is a very popular program in every community that it is in and has worked well for almost 40 years. Please continue to invest in STS and its Crew Leaders that the state employs. The Senate Judiciary & Public Safety Committee just passed the A5 amendment last week to continue to fund the STS program. Please agree with the Senate to fund our program or make an amendment in the House to fund STS and save our jobs. I have a wife and 4 kids that depend on me and I want to be here in Minnesota, but if my job is cut, it's very realistic that we might have to move out of state to find employment. Please save our jobs and help us by continuing the STS programs around the state. I would be glad to testify or talk to anyone about the STS program, so please reach out. Thank you for your time and for representing our great state of Minnesota!

Sincerely,

Keith Knaeble-STC Crew Leader