



Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys Supports HF 55

Submitted January 10, 2023

Members of the MN House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee,

Girl Scouts River Valleys is the local council of Girl Scouts of the USA, a registered 501(c)3 organization and the preeminent leadership development organization for girls. Girl Scouts aims to offer every girl a chance to practice a lifetime of leadership, adventure, and success. Girl Scouts River Valleys serves over 29,000 members in southern Minnesota, western Wisconsin, and one county in Iowa.

Girl Scouts River Valleys is writing today in support of HF 55 which establishes an office for missing and murdered Black women and girls within the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs. The disturbing and unacceptable statistics surrounding case closings, reporting, and treatment of Black women and girls reflect the historic systemic racism that has caused, and continues to cause trauma in Black communities.

As an over 100-year-old organization that strives to uplift **all** girls by centering their needs, we understand that undoing these disparities requires a multi-pronged, thoughtful approach that centers Black women and girls. This includes direct support and partnerships with state, local and tribal agencies, community organizations working on the frontlines of this crises, and most importantly, Black women and girls themselves. HF 55 does just that. Built off the recommendations of the first-in-the-nation Task Force on Missing and Murdered African American Women, this office will provide the vital data and partnerships needed to research and prevent these crimes.

We ask that that you support HF 55 and take this crucial step forward for Black women and girls in Minnesota. We would be happy to further discuss with any of you the details of our support for this issue, please feel free to reach out at any time to Sara Gangelhoff, Advocacy and Community Relations Manager at Girl Scouts River Valleys, advocacy@girlscoutsrv.org.

Thank you for your service on this committee and your attention to this bill.

Tisha Bolger

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tisha Bolger".

Chief Executive Officer

Girl Scouts River Valleys