



Office of the Commissioner

445 Minnesota Street • Suite 1000 • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-5100
Phone: 651.201.7160 • Fax: 651.297.5728 • TTY: 651.282.6555
dps.mn.gov

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Dear Conferees,

As you embark on crafting an Omnibus Public Safety and Judiciary bill I want to provide you with information on items from the Governor's budget proposal necessary to build a safer Minnesota. We urge you to consider the proposal we've put forward to not only address violent crime but to boost support to first responders, address local emergency management needs and Department of Public Safety operational concerns.

The Governor's proposal puts forward a strategic plan that takes a holistic approach to addressing the state's recent and ongoing spike in violent crime by making investments in prevention, intervention and enforcement. A bill that only makes investments in just one or even two of these areas will fail to address the issues we are facing today. We need smart data driven investments at the State level and to provide resources for local communities, so they are able to better meet their unique needs.

Prevention – There is widespread agreement with both community and police that the best way to reduce crime is to stop it from ever happening. The Governor's Budget provides the following critical prevention investments for already existing programs and priorities:

- \$10 million (FY23) for community-based public safety grants that allow for a variety of public safety programs for prevention opportunities that fit the unique challenges faced by communities across the state. This investment will be used to meet the needs of programs statewide as we historically receive more requests than funds available.
- \$3 million (FY23) for Youth development programs, including after-school activities, tutoring, mentoring, workforce development, mental health services, and truancy prevention. For our youth intervention grant program, we receive significantly more in requests than we do funds available. This investment will help reach even more programs dedicated to serving youth.
- \$1.213 million (FY23) in additional resources to the Office of Justice Programs to strengthen the office's outreach, monitoring and compliance capabilities. These are critical responsibilities for the Office of Justice Programs.
- \$900,000 (FY23) in Disparities Reduction and Delinquency Prevention grants. This state investment will be added to the federal funds dedicated to these statewide initiatives.

Alcohol
and Gambling
Enforcement

Bureau of
Criminal
Apprehension

Driver
and Vehicle
Services

Emergency
Communication
Networks

Homeland
Security and
Emergency
Management

Minnesota
State Patrol

Office of
Communications

Office of
Justice Programs

Office of
Pipeline Safety

Office of
Traffic Safety

State Fire
Marshal

Intervention – Even with successful prevention strategies in place, we know that young people are exposed to many different influences and a sound intervention strategy is a necessary component to disrupting crime. The Governor proposed the following intervention strategies:

- \$12.5 million (FY23) investment in grants to programs serving victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and general crime. This investment prepares Minnesota to weather the coming short-term federal funding gap.
- \$2.8 million (FY23) for additional youth conflict resolution centers, which are community spaces to facilitate conflict resolution including courses in community awareness, health and wellness, entrepreneurship, leadership, and mental health.
- \$1 million (FY23) in grants to local units of Government to initiate or expand Crossover Youth Practice Model/Dual Status Youth Programs in accordance with the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice Model. These programs impact some of the most at-risk children who are involved in both our juvenile justice and child welfare systems.
- \$1 million (FY23) for General Crime and Trauma Recovery Funding to provide wraparound services for victims of crime who experience trauma.
- \$500,000 (FY23) to establish a domestic violence housing first program to provide resources for survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence to access safe and stable housing.
- \$750,000 (FY23) in funding transitional housing programming to provide medium-to-longer term housing and advocacy services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence to aid in their recovery and healing.

Enforcement – We know that over-policing causes disparate impacts on communities and erodes the trust that is essential to good policing. The Governor’s plan instead includes strategic data-driven enforcement investments:

- The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension’s (BCA) budget request to combat the rising level of violent crime (\$9.8 million in FY23) has three main components many of these are currently being deployed in the twin cities metro area with a focus on the Minneapolis crime problem but require additional investment to continue this work past the fall:
 - A Violent Crime Support Unit within the BCA Forensic Science Services would increase DNA and firearms testing capacity. This investment would create a new support and processing approach for violent crime to get leads to investigators in the field more quickly in order to identify those committing violent crimes. Additional lab funding will also allow a more data-driven approach to better inform testing decisions guiding our approach to forensic testing.
 - Analytical and operational support within the Criminal Information and Operations Section. With lower numbers of peace officers across Minnesota analyzing information and data is critically important, criminal intelligence analysts support violent crime investigations and work to identify those who wish to commit violent crimes in our communities whether it be interpersonal violence, threats to our schools, or faith-based institutions, or disrupting criminal organizations. These civilian analysts ensure the limited number of available peace officers are utilizing the best data and most strategic approach to reducing violent crime. They are a crucial component of a violent crime reduction strategy.

- A violent crime investigative partnership to boost investigative resources at the BCA as well as provide support to local agencies across the state investigating violent crimes, violent criminal organizations, and disrupting plots of mass violence before they occur. The BCA continues to be asked to assist more agencies in their investigative work and we must have additional resources to meet those demands for service.

As we have seen time and time again the work of law enforcement and first responders is unique. As a state, we need to look at investing in the profession to draw in new highly qualified candidates while also taking care of the public servants currently taking care of us. To do that we need to recruit, train and take care of our first responders (Police, Fire, and EMS) with ideas like:

- The Senate, House, and Governor all agree that getting body cameras on every licensed peace officer statewide is of critical importance. The Governor's request is for \$6 million to cover the cost of equipping every officer in the State.
- The Governor recommends establishing an office that provides leadership and resources for improving the mental health of first responders statewide. \$2 million (FY23) would be used to staff the office and to administer any available grant funding for initiatives such as first responder peer-to-peer counseling, critical incident stress management, and co-responder programs.
- \$1.975 million (FY23) to improve recruitment efforts of law enforcement statewide. Funding would be used to employ recruiters, provide \$1,000 annual student loan payments to newly-hired police officers over a period of five years, develop a first responder career website, and develop and administer a recruitment advertising campaign.
- \$4 million (FY23) is recommended for the training of peace officers and other first responders. These funds would allow the purchase of a mobile simulator and provide funding to support staff to operate and administer the training across the state. These trailers would allow first responder agencies statewide to provide immersive, dynamic training experiences that better imitate real-world scenarios.

I would also like the committee to consider several other essential parts of the Governor's supplemental budget that address DPS operational needs as well as support for emergency management across the state.

- \$3 million (FY23) to provide grant funding for local emergency management programs, to be equally distributed among all 87 counties, 11 tribes, and 4 cities of first-class that apply for funding. Statutes require political subdivisions within the state to have a local organization for emergency management, but there is no dedicated state funding to help local governments meet those requirements.
- \$2.391 million (FY23) is needed during this time of international instability, the BCA's Cybersecurity upgrades are even more critical with numerous geopolitical threats to our Nation. This initiative has been partially funded in previous budgets and we must make the total investment in this item now to ensure the security and stability of our vital criminal justice systems.
- \$500,000 (FY23) to produce new Mutual Aid and Multi-Agency Emergency response training materials, products, and for training instructions.

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- \$510,000 (FY23) for DPS's Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division for additional agents to keep up with the growing demand for its services.
- \$150,000 (FY23) for the State Fire Marshal to cover a deficiency and an increase in funding to support the work of the Ordinance Disposal Units aka "bomb squads" statewide.

As both bills contain policy and budget items, I want to bring to your attention a few policy ideas that are necessary to help move the work of the Department of Public Safety and public safety in Minnesota.

- HF3957/SF3979 provides technical fixes to the OJP statute, modernizes the computer theft statute, creates a new questioned identity process, and updates the statute regarding the state fire code.
- HF3956/SF3785 would allow for the Next Generation 911 to come to Minnesota so you can call, text, or talk to 911 from any device in any part of the state.
- HF 4339/SF4174 would put in place body camera footage release policy that is used by State Agencies and we believe is possible to implement by all agencies with body worn cameras.
- HF3543/SF2854 would allow for a drugged driving pilot project and a technical correction to out-of-state impaired driving search warrants.
- HF3477/SF3477 would allow the BCA to better serve its law enforcement partners better with access to criminal justice data communications network and its community better by the creation of the BCA advisory group.

I urge the Senate to consider strong investments in prevention and intervention activities as well as investing in the strategic and specialized investigative support only the BCA can provide. I appreciate the Senate bill for funding two new school safety center staff, local government emergency management grants, and funding for body worn cameras and body camera data storage. However, relying on increasing penalties and investments in one-off programs will have little or no effect on crime. We can see that there are currently insufficient policing resources and that even the most optimistic assessment shows a 3-5 year lag in making up the great retirements, bonus money or not, to provide enforcement.

The House bill provides a strong investment in community safety with investments in Prevention, Intervention, and Enforcement. The depth and breadth of the grant opportunities funded in both the House bill and the Governor's Budget are absolutely critical to reducing violence in communities throughout Minnesota. These grants are to be made available to local governments statewide, crime is not solely a metro issue and law enforcement, community groups, and nonprofits from Duluth to Rochester and so many points in between are asking for the state help. There is no one size fits all solution but together these programs will make a difference in Minnesotans' lives and improve the safety of our communities. I applaud the House's commitment to these important programs that push the state to lean forward into envisioning a public safety strategy that looks and feels different.

The House bill does contain language that DPS needs to address. The first requires state law enforcement agencies to send civilian Internal Affairs (IA) staff into ongoing active protests, riots, dynamic events, and active police scenes. DPS has deep concerns with this provision including how it would be implemented. This approach sets up new and additional opportunities for conflict and mistrust when the public engaging with these staff want law enforcement removed or to stop or change a tactic and these staff have no ability to meet those types of demands. DPS has a tiny staff of IA investigators far too small to address the range of cases that this bill would seemingly require. This bill does not provide DPS with the resources necessary to complete this work in any meaningful way. DPS is a leader in this space in Minnesota utilizing civilian investigators for state law enforcement that are not part of any of our law enforcement divisions but certainly, there are ways to improve internal affairs

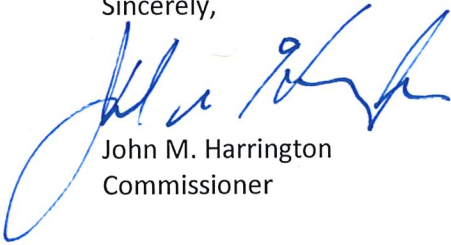
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processes at every level of government. DPS would be interested in the opportunity to engage in those future conversations with the legislature and other stakeholders on this matter.

Another provision DPS needs to address is the added direct wine shipper language that was previously in the liquor omnibus bill. This will greatly increase the workload of DPS's Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division but does not provide the needed resources to complete this new work. Finally, the Fusion Center report that was added via amendment on the House floor will require multiple BCA staff to complete hours of work. Without additional resources to complete this report, the BCA will do less work to improve safety in Minnesota.

Advancing public safety in Minnesota is not simple nor a political issue. We must commit to working together, listening to the communities we serve and those who have been most impacted by the rise in violent crime. The mission of the Department of Public Safety is "Serving all communities to build a safer Minnesota" please consider our input as you try and do the same.

Sincerely,



John M. Harrington
Commissioner

