

HENNEPIN COUNTY
ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

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Representative Jamie Becker-Finn
559 State Office Building
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Chair Becker-Finn:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my support for the juror per diem increase found in Section 12, Subd.4 of House File 3872 that would increase juror compensation from \$20 to \$100.

Participating on a jury is an impossible burden for far too many Minnesotans because they can't afford it. At \$20 per day, jury service quickly becomes untenable for working class Minnesotans who must take time off work, often without pay, and/or arrange for unbudgeted childcare. This results in juries that are not fully representative of the economic and racial diversity of our communities.

The data bears out that there is a demonstrable lack of diversity in juries statewide. A judge in the Fourth Judicial District recently found that Black Hennepin County residents comprise 14.2% of the population but constitute only 6.9% of the district's jury pools. Similarly, an Inforum News report recently found that, in Olmsted County, the percentage of Black residents in the jury pool is 59% less than would be expected. In Rice County, the percentage of Hispanic residents in the jury pool is 79% less than would be expected. These disparities open cases to legal challenges. For example, we recently litigated a case at the Supreme Court where the jury's representativeness was at issue.

Many who have studied this issue, including the Center for Jury Studies and National Center for State Courts, agree that increasing juror pay can enhance representation on juries. They found courts with jury pay that exceeds the national average have significantly lower excusal rates than courts whose juror pay is lower than the national average.

Increasing jury pay also has the added benefit of increasing the legitimacy of our legal system. When potential jurors are compensated adequately for their time and effort, they are more likely to take their role seriously and participate actively in the proceedings. National experts have found that when jurors feel that their time and contributions are valued, they are more likely to have faith in the judiciary and the fairness of the system overall.

In closing, thank you for including Section 12, Subd.4 of House File 3872, which would raise jury pay to \$100 a day. This would make Minnesota a national leader in jury compensation. This is a critical step toward building a more representative and fairer judicial system.

Sincerely,



Mary F. Moriarty
Hennepin County Attorney