



Dear Co-Chair Moller, Co-Chair Novotny, and members of the committee:

Violence Free Minnesota, the coalition to end relationship abuse, writes in strong support for HF 3946. Our membership-based organization has over 90 member programs providing domestic and sexual violence services in every county in the state.

Sections 1 and 4 of this bill create important data collection and reporting infrastructure to help us further understand the scope and severity of domestic violence in Minnesota. This will help legislative decisionmakers, state agency heads, and community-based response leaders make more informed, effective, and efficient decisions.

Section 3 of this bill ensures that local prosecutors have a plan regarding all domestic violence crimes, including crimes that are highly associated with domestic violence when they occur in a domestic context. This includes violations of various types of restraining orders and stalking. Public safety is best effectuated when an effective plan is in place, and ensuring that these crimes are planned for and taken seriously is in the best interest of victim/survivors.

Section 5 of this bill touches on one of the most pressing issues in our field: Gone On Arrival cases. Across the state, our members have informed us of varying but consistently disappointing law enforcement responses to cases where the perpetrator of domestic violence is not physically present when the police arrive. Under current law, police only have 72 hours to make a warrantless arrest for misdemeanor domestic violence. This often means that an abuser can avoid detection or arrest altogether. In some cases, we have seen the 72 hour rule misapplied to felonies. Getting rid of the 72 hour rule will help alleviate these concerns and help survivors work more effectively with law enforcement.

Sections 6, 7, and 10 ensure that, when people who do harm are arrested, they will not be released prior to the opportunity for a Domestic Abuse No Contact Order (DANCO) hearing. Allowing the courts the time to consider and issue a DANCO is an important safety issue for survivors. When a perpetrator is released without a DANCO, then the survivor is left advocating for their own safety through the Order For Protection or Harassment Restraining Order procedure. The DANCO is a powerful tool which helps the state take that burden off of survivors.

Sections 8 and 9 further help inform our state decisionmakers on how to achieve a world free from violence. Minnesota has a long and proud history of leadership in the crime victims' services field. Our state is the site of our country's first domestic violence shelter, Women's Advocates. It is where the Power and Control wheel was invented, and where the Duluth Model was created. Our long tradition of innovation has made us a standard-bearer for victim-centered services. Please support this bill, and these many improvements to our domestic violence response system.

Thank you,
Katie Kramer and Nikki Engel
Co-Executive Directors
Violence Free Minnesota