



MINNESOTA CHAPTER

Representative Kelly Moller, Chair
Public Safety Finance and Policy
March 15, 2024

Chair Moller and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW-MN), we are writing in support of HF3671, a bill that modifies the definition of a child in need of protective services.

NASW-MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing about 2000 social workers. Our members work in a wide variety of settings, including direct practice (clinical and non-clinical) and macro practice. While the populations served by social workers vary greatly, many are all impacted by children and families interacting with the child protection system or juvenile justice system. In particular, the issues addressed by social workers – poverty, addiction, mental health, disabilities, homelessness, etc. – can both exacerbate and be exacerbated by children’s delinquent behavior.

We advocate for policies which support every child growing up in a nurturing and safe environment and advocate for trauma-responsive policies that foster participation, restoration, safety, and resilience. We support policies and programs that address social and economic root causes of juvenile crime. Increasing the age in which we can offer flexibility in our response to delinquency works toward those goals.

Social workers recognize the interdependence of systems and understand that while it is important to take action when children commit a petty crime or act in otherwise delinquent behavior, our response will have lasting impact on them and the rest of society. We appreciate that this bill allows more flexibility in that response.

We appreciate your service and work on this important issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen E. Goodenough'.

Karen E. Goodenough, PhD, LGSW
Executive Director
NASW-MN

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Arneson'.

Jenny Arneson, MSW, LGSW
Legislative Consultant
NASW-MN