

Minnesota Harm Reduction Collaborative

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Representative Kelly Moller, Chair
Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
479 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Senator Ron Latz, Chair
Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
Minnesota State Senate
3105 Minnesota Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Moller and Chair Latz:

Thank you for the opportunity allowing the Minnesota Harm Reduction Collaborative to weigh-in on specific legislation included in the House and Senate versions of the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Finance bills, SF2909.

The House version of the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Finance bill includes HF2041 (Gomez)/SF2261 (Oumou Verbeten), a bill that authorizes syringe services to possess, distribute, and dispose of syringes; authorizes the hypodermic syringes and changes to the state statute related to drug paraphernalia (See House version, Article 16, Sections 1-6 and 13-15).

We are pleased to see HF2041's language included in the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Finance bill as drug paraphernalia policy should be focused on saving lives and reducing the risks of overdose.

History has shown that harsh penalties for drug use and paraphernalia does nothing to help people and only worsens the tragic overdose crisis. Tougher laws and sentences around drug paraphernalia results in more death, avoidable diseases, and creates greater risks when individuals seek drugs and drug paraphernalia in the illicit market, particularly impacting low-income people and communities of color. These drug paraphernalia laws also threaten to punish nonusers involved in harm reduction activities.

The legislation, as it now stands, allows Minnesota to move forward with allowing syringe services providers to operate under and within defined parameters as well as decriminalizing drug paraphernalia and residues contained therein. These changes will undoubtedly reduce harm and save lives of Minnesotans and we urge the conference committee members to support the inclusion of HF2041.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the conference committee.

Sincerely,

Edward Browning Krumpotich

Chair: Minnesota Harm Reduction Collaborative

C: Rep. Jamie Becker-Finn
 Rep. Sandra Feist
 Rep. Cedrick Frazier
 Rep. Brion Curran
 Sen. Clare Oumou Verbeten
 Sen. Sandra Pappas
 Sen. Judy Seeberger
 Sen. Bonnie Westlin