

February 24, 2025

Chair Paul Novotny
2nd Floor, Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Novotny and Members of the House Public Safety Finance & Policy Committee:

OutFront Minnesota, founded in 1987, is our state's largest LGBTQ+ advocacy organization.

We write today to oppose HF 435 (Franson).

OutFront Minnesota seeks to advocate for our communities in every aspect of our lives. That includes individuals who are incarcerated. All incarcerated individuals in our state maintain rights and protections that must be respected and upheld - these include obligations to ensure their health and safety.

HF 435 singles out transgender incarcerated individuals - specifically transgender women - and proposes housing policies that would unquestionably expose them to greater harm. This proposed legislation sits in contrast to more than a decade-old policy recommendations established under the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) and longstanding protections on the basis of gender identity here within the state of Minnesota. Existent policy in Minnesota seeks to balance these considerations and clearly addresses concerns around safety of the individuals and their fellow inmates.

There are many issues facing our state's criminal justice system that compound existing disparities and perpetuate harm; these are persistent and important concerns that this committee should be addressing. Legislation like HF 435 that singles out a small and historically marginalized group does nothing to address those serious concerns, and has the potential to cause harm to all transgender Minnesotans.

Our state's efforts around public safety should not be furthering harm.

OutFront Minnesota opposes HF 435, and urges this committee and our state to continue a necessary and broader discussion around our state's approach to public safety that centers the rights and dignity of *all* Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Kat Rohn
Executive Director