

March 16, 2023

Members of the Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee:

On behalf of NAMI Minnesota, we are writing in support of HF 1838. NAMI Minnesota participated in the Delivery System Standards and Funding Policy Working Group with the Center for State Governments last year and we are happy to support the provisions in this bill. Very often, mental health treatment is an integral part of community supervision. Even when it is not a condition of probation, we know that good mental health is foundational for people to successfully complete their criminal sentence. HF 1838 contains several provisions that will promote mental health and, subsequently, safety in our communities.

We support the efforts in this bill to prioritize staying in the community over incarceration. When there is no threat to public safety it is important to limit the harmful impacts of incarceration. Minor technical violations can return people to prison, disrupting their recovery and straining resources in our prison system. Even a very short stay in jail can be detrimental to a person's mental health.

This also speaks to the importance of having uniform standards across the state in supervision practices. In addition to reducing racial and geographic disparities, developing standards increases wellness and safety in our communities by responding to real risks and needs and providing individualized support for people.

Finally, we support reworking the funding formula for supervision across the state. The mental health community is very familiar with being asked to do a difficult task with few resources. We are also familiar with the principle that if we do not invest in prevention and intervention, we will pay a much greater cost down the road. We are working to build a mental health system that is equitable and accessible for all Minnesotans, including people with criminal records and formerly incarcerated people. We hope you will support this bill and building a smart and safe supervision system that prioritizes recovery and rehabilitation.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director

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