

March 3, 2021

Re: HF 1121 Sex Offense Statute of Limitations Eliminated

Dear Chair Mariani and Committee Members:

As Ramsey County Commissioners, we are proud to offer our support to HF 1121 (Hollins), a bill to eliminate the statute of limitations on sex crimes going forward in Minnesota. This change will allow more perpetrators to be brought to justice and will provide important closure for the hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans who have been victims of sexual violence over our lives.

As survivors ourselves, we know all too well the many obstacles that exist for victims to bring their cases to justice and to stop perpetrators from continuing to cause harm. In many cases, it can take years before the victim is ready to process what happened to them and to acknowledge to themselves or others that a violation occurred. Often these are crimes committed by “trusted” members of the community or even family members, producing difficult and conflicting emotions that make coming forward difficult. Often too these crimes are perpetrated against children, and although existing statute grants these cases a longer statute of limitations than for adult cases, in many cases those children may still live with and be under the authority of those family members throughout the duration of the limitation period.

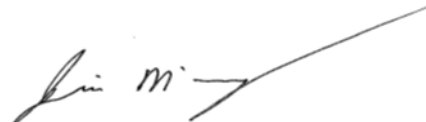
Although in many cases these crimes, like many others, become more difficult to prosecute or prove guilt over time, this bill recognizes that by not making this retroactive for cases that have already expired. However, even without this new legal avenue for victims, we believe that this will provide an important avenue for adult victims to find healing and closure. Recognizing that healing doesn’t truly begin until justice has been served, victims can take comfort in knowing that future generations of Minnesotans will have more routes to seek justice.

At Ramsey County, we have committed to a “start by believing” approach to reports of sexual violence, including by partnering with the Ramsey County Attorney’s Office on a comprehensive review of our sexual assault cases. When victims encounter compassionate responses, they heal faster, and it opens doors for others to report and give the criminal justice system a chance to hold perpetrators accountable. We strongly support the HF 1121 and urge committee members to support it. Please feel free to contact Melissa Finnegan (651-278-8374) with any questions regarding this request.

Thank you,



Commissioner Trista MatasCastillo
Ramsey County Commissioners



Commissioner Jim McDonough