

Minnesota House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee Chair and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony in strong opposition to HF 962. While the bill is framed as a measure to ensure “due process” protections for peace officers, its real-world consequences especially in Minnesota’s most vulnerable and high-crime communities raise serious concerns about accountability, public trust, and equal justice under the law.

At its core, HF 962 risks protecting government actors from the consequences of dishonesty, while simultaneously weakening safeguards designed to prevent wrongful convictions.

1. Retaining Officers Deemed Unreliable Undermines Public Safety

Under current legal standards, when a prosecutor determines that an officer is “Brady-impaired” meaning their history of dishonesty makes them unreliable in court

that officer can no longer effectively perform one of their primary duties: providing credible testimony.

HF 962 would make it significantly harder to discipline or remove such officers. This creates a situation where taxpayers are forced to continue funding positions for individuals who cannot fully carry out their responsibilities.

In communities already struggling with high crime and strained police relations, this means continued exposure to officers whose credibility has been formally called into question. That is not a recipe for safer neighborhoods it is a recipe for deeper mistrust and ineffective law enforcement.

2. Weakening Accountability for Truthfulness

The constitutional requirements established under Brady and Giglio are not technicalities they are essential protections ensuring that defendants receive a fair trial. These rules require full disclosure of exculpatory evidence and hold law enforcement accountable for honesty.

HF 962, by limiting disciplinary consequences for officers who fail to disclose such evidence, risks sending the message that truthfulness is optional.

When there is no meaningful accountability for withholding evidence or providing misleading information, the integrity of the justice system is compromised. This directly increases the risk of wrongful convictions the very “railroading” of citizens that many Minnesotans fear.

3. Creating a Double Standard Under the Law

A foundational principle of our justice system is equal treatment under the law.

If a private citizen lies in court or withholds evidence, they face serious criminal penalties, including perjury or obstruction of justice. HF 962 creates a troubling imbalance by offering special protections to government agents who engage in similar conduct.

No public servant especially one entrusted with the power to detain, arrest, and testify should be held to a lower standard of accountability than the citizens they serve.

4. Eroding Public Trust and Cooperation

Effective policing depends on community trust. In many urban and economically disadvantaged areas, that trust is already fragile.

When communities see that officers with documented credibility issues are shielded from meaningful consequences, it reinforces the perception that the system protects its own rather than pursuing justice.

The result is predictable reduced cooperation with law enforcement, fewer witnesses willing to come forward, and ultimately, higher crime rates. Law and order cannot exist where the law itself is not trusted.

5. Concerns Regarding the Proposed Task Force

HF 962 proposes further study through a task force. However, the composition of such a body raises legitimate concerns about balance and objectivity. If dominated by organizations with a vested interest in limiting officer discipline, the outcome is unlikely to prioritize the rights of citizens or the integrity of the justice system.

Conclusion

HF 962, though presented as a fairness measure, ultimately prioritizes the job security of government employees over the constitutional rights of the public. It weakens accountability, risks increasing wrongful convictions, and undermines the trust necessary for effective policing.

Minnesota deserves a justice system that is transparent, accountable, and committed to truth. This bill moves us in the opposite direction.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to reject HF 962.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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