

**Carlos Mariani**  
State Representative

District 65B  
Saint Paul



# Minnesota House of Representatives

CHAIR: HOUSE PUBLIC SAFETY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

May 25, 2022

Members of the Law Enforcement Coalition:

As the Chair of the MN House Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Committee, I recognize, as you have, that Minnesota is at a crossroads as it confronts both a rise in violent crime and a professional public safety staffing crises. That places the safety of all Minnesotans at peril. We both have recognized that while law enforcement alone cannot solve the public safety problems of this state, there is no way we can solve these problems without the work of those in your profession. Clearly, this moment requires urgent state legislative action and political compromise for additional resources for public safety.

So I write to you today because I believe law enforcement voices are vital to overcoming the apathy in the midst of an emergency that we face from key state legislative decision makers. I write to ask that the Law Enforcement Associations join me in requesting that Senator Limmer continue negotiations by responding to my last offer and by requesting that Senate Majority Leader Miller agrees to a special session so that the legislature can address the national rise in violent crime we are seeing impact Minnesota.

Despite my willingness to provide the resources that both the MN House and Senate say they need to properly fund law enforcement, the MN Senate majority has decided to unilaterally give up on our bill negotiations. Some have alleged that the negotiations have stalled because of my request for a bill that balances law enforcement funding with community based crime prevention and intervention funding. This excuse for giving up on coming to an agreement, in the middle of an emergency, is false.

I am sure you agree that negotiations only work when both sides are willing to give. I am willing to give the other body what they are requesting in terms of law enforcement resources and certain criminal penalty increases. The other body has not even gestured, let alone stated in an open letter, a willingness to respond in kind.

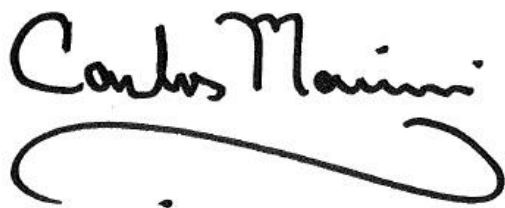
On a substantive level, what I request is not only noncontroversial, it's necessary to immediately combat crime. As you know, much of these efforts are supported by your membership, members of the business community, and members of community non-profit organizations, mayors, city councilmembers, and county commissioners from across the state and across the aisle.

I've heard some inaccurately argue that these community crime prevention efforts won't have an immediate effect on crime. This is flatly untrue. As you all well know, our caucus has championed these efforts because local electeds and law enforcement have all stated that, during a workforce shortage, diversifying public safety responses can immediately build law enforcement capacity vital to combating crime by using community based programs to do social work that was once performed solely by law enforcement. They have argued that having others perform this community based work creates additional law enforcement capacity by allowing law enforcement to focus on responding to and investigating the type of violent crime that only law enforcement is suited to respond to.

Similarly, some have disparaged my efforts to fund community based prevention and intervention as some new, untested, big government program. More than anyone, your membership understands that while these efforts are innovative, they are not new, or untested. As you well know, the local public safety block grants I am looking to fund would help resource ongoing law enforcement efforts like the mental health crisis response teams championed by Chief Blair Anderson, the community ambassadors program heralded by Sheriff Fletcher, the SMART Center touted by Sheriff Tim Leslie, and the community based violence prevention initiatives supported by the Minnesota Business Partnership's Committee of Racial Equity. These are proposals that every credible voice on public safety has stated are vital to address this rise in crime. For that reason, I do not apologize for requiring that we use every tool available to us to address the crises we are confronted with, and your membership should not either.

While we've had our differences in the past, I believe we agree on properly funding public safety. We both are now at odds with a Senate that has found the politics of political convenience to be more motivating than an ongoing threat to public safety that they have themselves recognized and railed against for the past six months. As a member of a racially and ethnically diverse community that has borne much of the brunt of the rise in crime and extremism, I've called on law enforcement for aid in the past based on my understanding of our shared desire to place public safety before ideological or partisan differences. I call on you again for your aid in bridging the chasm of political convenience created by some who would make Minnesotans suffer in order to play political games with peoples lives. I again ask that the Law Enforcement Associations join me in requesting that Senator Limmer continue negotiations by responding to my last offer and by requesting that Senate Majority Leader Miller agrees to a special session so that the legislature can address the national rise in violent crime we are seeing impact Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carlos Mariani". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right and then loops back under the name.

Representative Carlos Mariani  
Chair, MN House Committee on Public Safety, Criminal Justice Reform