



Office of the Commissioner

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The Honorable Warren Limmer
Senate Judiciary & Public Safety Finance & Policy Committee
3221 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Limmer and Members of the Senate Judiciary & Public Safety Finance & Policy Committee,

This letter is written in response to the committee's omnibus bill, Senate File 2673. I am disappointed this bill contains none of the critical investments proposed in the Governor's budget designed to enhance community safety across Minnesota. The Governor's proposal put forward a strategic plan that takes a holistic approach to addressing the state's recent and ongoing spike in violent crime by making investments in prevention, intervention and enforcement. For the first time in state history we have the opportunity to make investments that are the keys to make Minnesota communities safer for all.

The Senate approach rather offers a plan that does not address the fear of crime or the needs of communities' but relies on increasing penalties on a variety of crimes and makes disjointed investments in one-off programs. These approaches will have little or no effect on crime as we can see that there are not sufficient policing resources necessary to provide enforcement. The Senate bill leaves behind crime victims and the families who have lost loved ones to domestic violence, that in some communities now make up a third of the murder victims. The senate bill does not create an actual plan to address community safety.

Prevention – There is widespread agreement the best way to reduce crime is to stop it from ever happening. The Governor's Budget provides the following critical prevention investments needed in addition to youth intervention grants:

- \$10 million for community-based crime prevention grants that allow for a breadth of prevention opportunities that fit the unique challenges faced by communities across the state.
- \$10 million in ongoing investment for community policing models led by local partnerships that includes and local business support, law enforcement, and houses of worship that provide community resources.

Alcohol
and Gambling
Enforcement

Bureau of
Criminal
Apprehension

Driver
and Vehicle
Services

Emergency
Communication
Networks

Homeland
Security and
Emergency
Management

Minnesota
State Patrol

Office of
Communications

Office of
Justice Programs

Office of
Pipeline Safety

Office of
Traffic Safety

State Fire
Marshal

- Additional resources to the Office of Justice Programs to increase the resources for strategic youth-focused investments; as well as strengthening the office's monitoring and compliance capabilities.

Intervention – Even with successful prevention strategies in place, we know that young people are exposed to many different influences including increasingly the use of drugs that can lead to violence and crime. A sound intervention strategy is a necessary component to disrupting crime. The Governor proposes the following intervention strategies:

- \$12.5 million investment in grants to programs serving victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and general crime. These investments bolster and expand the services available across Minnesota and prepares Minnesota to weather any short-term federal funding gaps.
- \$1 million Grants to local units of Government to initiate or expand Crossover Youth Practice Model/Dual Status Youth Programs in accordance with the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice Model. These program impact some of the most at-risk children who are involved in both our juvenile justice and child welfare systems.
- \$4.8 million in the Community Outpost Outreach and Engagement, and Youth Conflict Resolution and Empowerment, provides ongoing funding for establishing Community Outpost Houses and youth conflict resolution centers. This effort will establish places where community members can connect with outreach programs, learn about applicable government services, provide community meeting space, and host mentoring and tutoring programs.

Enforcement – We know that historically an unfocused policing effort does not reduce crime but it does often cause disparate impacts on certain communities further eroding the trust that is essential to good policing. The Governor's plan instead includes strategic data-driven enforcement investments:

- The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's (BCA) budget request to combat the rising level of violent crime (\$9.8 million) has three main components:
 - A Violent Crime Support Unit within the BCA Forensic Science Services that would increase DNA and firearms testing capacity. It would create a new support and processing approach for violent crime to get leads to investigators in the field more quickly to identify those committing violent crimes. The investment would also allow a more data driven approach to better inform testing decisions to guide our approaches to forensic testing.
 - Analytical and operational support within the Criminal Information and Operations Section. With lower number of peace officers across Minnesota analyzing information and data is critical important. These criminal intelligence analysts would support violent crime investigations and work to identify those who wish to commit violent crime in our communities whether it be interpersonal violence, threats to our schools or faith based institutions, or disrupting criminal organizations. This data driven strategic approach is a critical component to an intelligent approach to policing at a time with a reduced number of officers across Minnesota.

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- A violent crime investigative partnership to provide support to local agencies across the state investigating violent crimes, violent criminal organizations, and disrupting plots of mass violence before they occur.
- DPS objects to the funding in this bill that ties resources provided to the State Patrol to one county in the State. As a statewide law enforcement organization, it is imperative that the Patrol have budget support to assist wherever they are needed. An additional appropriation to assist agencies with aviation support to assist with violent crime efforts would be more helpful. In addition the Governor's revised supplemental budget includes funding for a new twin engine helicopter that will help the State Patrol support local units of government in more safely responding to pursuits and search and rescue missions.

Several other essential parts of the Governor's supplemental budget were not included. The State Fire Marshal has requested an increase in funding to support the work of bomb squads statewide and the Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division has requested funding for additional agents. The BCA's request for simulation training trailers would have allowed every law enforcement agency, including the smaller agencies outside of the metro where 60% of our officer involved shooting occur, a greater the ability to provide immersive, dynamic training experiences that better imitate real world scenarios.

DPS's First Responder Wellness Office is a recommendation from the Deadly Force Encounters Working Group; we need to make this investment to ensure we are providing the resources are first responders the tools and resources they need to stay healthy and strong. As so many groups have stated public safety is struggling to get new recruits in the pipeline to serve. Keeping those already trained and seasoned professional healthy is there for a necessity in both the long and short term.

During this time of international instability, the BCA's Cybersecurity upgrades are even more critical with numerous geopolitical threats to our Nation. This initiative has been partially funded in previous budgets and we must make the total investment in this item now to ensure security and stability of our vital criminal justice systems.

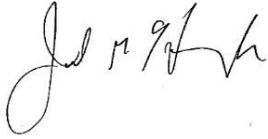
I appreciate the inclusion of the authorization of a pilot project on Drugged Driving, funding for body worn cameras, local government emergency management grants, prosecutorial training, and additional ongoing funding for the school safety center in this bill. I do believe these are important investments.

As this bill contains both policy and budget items, I want to bring to your attentions a few policy ideas that are not currently in the omnibus bill. The policies found in SF 3979 provide technical fixes to OJP statute, modernizes the computer theft statute, and updates statute regarding state fire code. SF 3785 would allow for the Next Generation 911 to come to Minnesota so you can call, text, or talk to 911 from any device in any part of the state. SF 4174 would put in place body camera footage release policy that is used by State Agencies and we believe is possible to implement by all agencies with body worn cameras. Lastly, SF 3477 would allow the BCA to better serve its law enforcement partners better with access to criminal justice data communications network and its community better by the creation of the BCA advisory group.

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As Senate File 2673 is considered by the Senate, I would encourage the committee review the proposals put forward in the Governor's budget and policy bills to help fill out this bill. These proposals are backed by years of experience, data driven analysis, and community input. I would be happy to work with you on this bill to make sure the people of Minnesota get a public safety bill that makes Minnesota communities safer for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John M. Harrington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent part.

John M. Harrington
Commissioner