



Office of Mayor Jacob Frey

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May 6, 2021

Senator Warren Limmer
3221 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Carlos Mariani
479 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

As the Mayor of the City of Minneapolis, I want to thank you personally and on behalf of Minneapolis residents for the important work that you're doing to improve public safety for all Minnesotans. We are also greatly appreciative of the efforts of the POI caucus and members of the Minneapolis legislative delegation who have worked tirelessly to advance this work. There is palpable urgency and momentum for truly positive, far-reaching change. Your efforts to enact state-wide reforms have the potential to lead Minnesota into a better, safer future. I am broadly supportive of the reforms included in SF 970/HF1078 and urge Senate Republicans to work with your counterparts to ensure that Minnesota law continues bending toward justice.

In particular, I strongly support the statutory changes suggested on mandatory reporting when criminal actions are related to bias or discrimination, prohibiting law enforcement agencies and personnel from affiliating with white supremacist groups, and requiring law enforcement to complete a revised POST Board report when alleged police misconduct is observed and the corresponding changes to the statewide database housing that POST Board information. These reforms are ones on which lawmakers should find common ground and they will be a part of the necessary restructuring of our public safety system to eliminate bias and increase safety for all Minnesota communities. I likewise support the significant investment in training included in this bill. Modern training standards and courses offer opportunities for Minnesota law enforcement to be better prepared to help and protect the people with whom officers are interacting.

These measures are similar to changes that Minneapolis has already made or is in the process of making and would ensure there is a uniform standard to delivering public safety. Specifically, Minneapolis Police Department policy has been revised to require officers to not only intervene when an officer observes a fellow officer committing misconduct, but also to report that misconduct. Additionally, the bias and discriminatory crimes section of the Minneapolis Police Department policy has been amended with similar language to reflect the proposed statutory changes—with a specific focus on when a crime is committed based upon the perpetrator's perception of the victim's race, religion, ethnic/national origin, sex, age, disability or characteristics identified as sexual orientation. We've also taken steps at the local level to strengthen our internal disciplinary processes by adding investigative capacity to our Civil Rights Department, accelerating our timeline for disciplinary decisions, and shoring up the thoroughness of misconduct investigations by dedicating an experienced Assistant City Attorney to this vital work.

One additional element for your consideration is peace officer arbitration reform. In Minnesota police departments, roughly 50 percent of all disciplinary decisions – including termination – are overturned by an arbitrator. Police Chiefs and Mayors, and by extension our residents, would greatly benefit from a targeted change to State law so that the disciplinary decisions of Chief Law Enforcement Officers cannot be overturned through arbitration for proven instances of egregious misconduct, like lying on a police report or excessive use of force.

As we in Minneapolis continue to focus on changes in and beyond our Police Department, we support your work to make these changes to public safety systems across our state so that every person is protected and safe, regardless of race, religion, or gender. It is because of this need for deep, systemic change that we urge action on the legislation.

My office, our intergovernmental relations team, the Minneapolis Police Department and our professional staff are available to you as you work toward a budget agreement. Call on us at any time. Thank you for your work on this important issue and your service to the people of Minnesota.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JF', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mayor Jacob Frey
City of Minneapolis