



Rep. Lyndon Carlson
479 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

April 10, 2019

Dear Chair Carlson,

I am writing you today to provide comments on the House Judiciary and Public Safety Omnibus bill, HF2705 (Lesch). Gov. Walz and Lt. Gov. Flanagan's Budget for One Minnesota lays out a bold vision for the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, one that makes a transformative investment in our work to ensure that all Minnesotans are able to live joyful lives, free from discrimination and rich with opportunity. This includes expanding our presence throughout Minnesota with offices in Bemidji, Duluth, and Worthington.

I am deeply grateful that Chair John Lesch's bill fully funds all of these timely investments in the Department of Human Rights. Governor Walz's and the House's budget proposal makes new investments in ensuring that all Minnesotans are able to live lives free from discrimination, in thriving and welcoming communities. This budget also provides funding to maintain agency operations, allowing us to work from a solid base while facing rising costs.

This budget will allow us to open regional offices in Bemidji, Duluth, and Worthington building on the successes in our St. Cloud regional office working in partnership with the community there. We've seen the success and the need from our St. Cloud regional office, where the number of interactions with community members has nearly doubled compared to this time a year ago. Working with Minnesotans who have often been marginalized and exposed to painful situations we have learned that in person interaction is critical to build trust and best provide assistance. Working with businesses and communities to solve problems before they become acute also requires building ongoing relationships. Expanding that effort to Bemidji, Duluth, and Worthington will help the residents of those communities in similar positive ways.

HF2705 also contains important policy provisions dealing with data classifications for MDHR, providing clarity in statutory language regarding Workforce Certificates, and ensuring that all state financed bonding projects provide opportunities for women and people of color to benefit by working on those projects. The inclusion of the policy language in HF10 (Moller) to reform the "severe or pervasive" sexual harassment standard courts have applied to the Minnesota Human Rights Act is an important step to making sure all Minnesota workers have the legal protections they need to be free from sexual harassment on the job.

Governor Walz's proposed budget makes investments to ensure that all Minnesotans are able to live lives free from discrimination, in thriving and welcoming communities. I'm grateful the House joins in advancing at vision. As this budget process moves forward I hope to continue to be strong partners in realizing a vision of Minnesota where all people, in all communities can be successful.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Lucero', written in a cursive style.

Rebecca Lucero, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Human Rights

Copies:

Members of the House Ways and Means Committee
Emily Lefholz, Policy Advisor, Office of Governor Tim Walz

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