

HENNEPIN COUNTY
ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Mary F. Moriarty
Hennepin County Attorney
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300 South 6th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55487

3/4/24

Senator Karin Housley
95 University Avenue W., Room 2213
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Patricia Mueller
253 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Housley and Representative Mueller:

I am writing to express my strong support for SF4342/HF4215, which will provide essential funding for therapy dog programs to support law enforcement suffering from job-related trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder and to assist in responding to individuals experiencing mental health crises. As the Hennepin County Attorney, I firmly believe that investing in the mental health of our law enforcement partners is critical.

Law enforcement officers face tremendous stress and often encounter situations that can take a toll on their mental health. It is imperative that we equip them with resources that promote their mental well-being and address job-related trauma. The introduction of therapy dogs as a support mechanism can play a significant role in alleviating the mental strain experienced by our officers.

In the Hennepin County Attorney's Office, we have witnessed the positive impact of incorporating a therapy dog named Barrett into our team. Barrett has proven invaluable in helping victims prepare for court appearances and testimony. His presence has provided comfort and support, contributing to a more positive and empowering experience for those navigating the often-challenging legal process.

The proposed bill not only acknowledges the importance of therapy dogs for law enforcement but also wisely extends this support to address mental health crises in the community. Funding programs that allow for the use of therapy dogs in response to mental health crisis calls supports a comprehensive and compassionate approach to public safety. This dual-purpose allocation of resources is a win-win, fostering a healthier environment for both our officers and the individuals they serve.

I appreciate the recognition of the profound impact that therapy dog programs can have on the mental well-being of our law enforcement officers and the broader community. Your support for SF4342/HF4215 will address a critical need for our law enforcement officers and contribute to a more compassionate and responsive approach to mental health crises. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Moriarty

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Mary F. Moriarty
Hennepin County Attorney