



Re: MSA and MCPA Position on House Omnibus Public Safety Bill

April 4, 2022

Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives,

The Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Minnesota Sheriffs Association (MSA) collectively represent more than 300 police chiefs and 87 county sheriffs across Minnesota. We write this letter to, again, express our collective concerns regarding HF 4608.

Minnesota is at a crossroads with a historic rise in violent crime, car jackings, and fleeing officers. These historic crime levels are coupled with a staffing crisis that our profession has never seen. The state needs a response to this public safety crisis that first puts resources in personnel, training, tougher penalties for violent crimes, and tools for our law enforcement agencies. While we acknowledge there is a role for innovative "community based" approaches, this proposal prioritizes those at the expense of proven law enforcement strategies. When this bill does provide funding for personnel and tools it attaches policy changes that our associations have testified against for the past three years. It also fails to consider any suggested changes presented to the Chair, Vice-Chair, and staff over the course of these sessions and special session negotiations. We want to be clear with the committee that we oppose this bill.

Provisions we support:

- We support the funding for body worn cameras and data storage investments.
- We support the funding for co-responders but do not support the idea that violence interrupters would be responding to a situation as a co-responder in the same manner as a peace officer.

Provisions we oppose:

- We oppose sunsetting any investment in public safety.
- Local units of government already have the authority to create civilian oversight councils. To expand the authority of these boards and make them an investigatory body with subpoena power, compel testimony, or disciplinary authority is overreaching and could undermine the CLEO's ability to appropriately use discipline as a tool for correcting misconduct and poor performance.
- The bill drastically changes the funding mechanism for local training reimbursement and will not allow the state money to be used for key mandated training the state requires officers to have. This is an unfunded mandate that will have dramatic impacts on agencies of all sizes.
- We oppose creating internal POST investigators. Agencies use other jurisdictions or the BCA to handle these incidents and that has worked well for all involved.
- We continue to oppose several provisions related to body cameras in the bill;
 - First, our associations oppose any new statewide policy requirements for body worn cameras. The creation of body worn camera policy should be done in partnership with the Community and their local Law enforcement agency. Sheriffs

and Chiefs of many cities can tell you the value of community meetings and listening sessions they had to formulate their body camera policy WITH their community. Many changes were made to policy because of those meetings with local community partners.

- While we don't object to changing the law to allow the next of kin or family members to see the body camera footage of an officer involved incident, we do object to the current language. The bill does not consider how long the interview process takes in these cases. Traditionally these interviews take longer than 5-days to complete. Our associations feel 10 business days is realistic. We support simply making the data public to all in these incidents after the interview process has concluded. With the understanding that the next of kin would be provided access prior to public release of the video.
- The language requiring no more redaction than is required by law is inflammatory. Law enforcement agencies follow current law. Additionally, it is the role of law enforcement agencies to protect the privacy of individuals and redaction requirements are appropriately covered under Chapter 13.
- We oppose the language that would require, when practical, that the officer notify individuals that they are being recorded. The use of Body Worn Cameras are not rare and in most places the community expects them to be utilized. Officer's attention is better directed at focusing on how to appropriately handle the call for services.

Provisions that would prioritize public safety that are not included in the bill, many of which are authored by members of the majority party:

- addressing auto thefts and carjacking increases;
- addressing the drastic increase in PTSD cases in public safety;
- creating a pipeline for new officers through the higher education system;
- helping agencies recruit and retain officers.

Our state has a historic opportunity to fund and support law enforcement when they need your help more than ever. Unfortunately, in its current form we don't feel this bill comes close to address those realities.

Sincerely,



Jeff Potts
Executive Director
Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association



William M. Hutton
Executive Director
Minnesota Sheriffs Association