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February 7, 2022

Rep. Melissa Hortman  
Rep. Ryan Winkler  
Rep. Kurt Daudt  
Sen. Jeremy Miller  
Sen. Dave Osmek  
Sen. Melisa López Franzen

Rep. Rena Moran  
Rep. Pat Garofalo  
Sen. Julie Rosen  
Sen. John Marty

Sen. Warren Limmer  
Sen. Ron Latz  
Rep. Carlos Mariani  
Rep. Brian Johnson

### **Re: County Endorsement of Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) Recommendations**

Dear Legislative Leaders:

The purpose of this correspondence is to articulate state-wide and non-partisan support for the policy and funding recommendations proposed by the Governor's Council on Justice Reinvestment. In 2021, state leaders requested support from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance and The Pew Charitable Trust to utilize the Justice Reinvestment Initiative. This initiative, which was supported by counties and all three branches of state government was formally endorsed by:

*Governor Tim Walz  
Chief Justice Lorie Skjerven Gildea  
Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman  
Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka  
Senator Julie A. Rosen, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee  
The Association of Minnesota Counties*

The Justice Reinvestment Initiative included the creation of a state-wide Delivery System Workgroup, which was comprised of corrections administrators representing each of the three delivery systems of community corrections, county commissioners, courts, tribes, victims, and behavioral health professionals.

The Delivery System Workgroup met extensively throughout 2021 and into 2022 to facilitate the assessment of community supervision across the state. In addition to defining core standards of supervision, the workgroup also worked to establish a proposal for sustainable funding for community corrections. These recommendations were endorsed by the Council on Justice Reinvestment and provided to the legislature on February 1, 2022.

In 2020, Minnesota spent the lowest proportion of state general funds on corrections in the United States. While the average amount a state spends on corrections is 6.5%, Minnesota spent 2.5% in 2020. While Minnesota has marginally increased overall correctional spending over the past 5 years, the state has prioritized spending in prisons.

While Minnesota imprisons fewer individuals per capita than most states (ranking 5<sup>th</sup> lowest nationally), the use of community supervision is heavily utilized (ranking 6<sup>th</sup> highest nationally).

Adequately funding community supervision is an investment in a safer Minnesota. Properly funded correctional agencies results in manageable caseloads with highly trained and competent probation officers who are better equipped to facilitate behavior change and impart compassionate accountability as needed. Adequate funding for community organizations who provide treatment programs, supportive housing, mental health care, and other resources that support those under supervision in the community is also vital to their success while under supervision.

Prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 60% of admissions to Minnesota prisons were due to failures to comply with supervision conditions, which highlights the potential return on investment of adequately funding community supervision.

It is in the interest of all Minnesotans that community corrections be as effective as possible in preventing continued criminal behavior and in assisting those under supervision to make long-term behavioral changes. These are not mutually exclusive goals. Further, from a cost perspective, effective community supervision is far more affordable than the costs associated with incarceration.

For the reasons articulated above, the undersigned endorse the recommendations that were put forward by the Council on Justice Reinvestment and appeal to all branches of Minnesota state government to pass legislation to enact them.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jason Anderson  
*Minnesota Association of County Probation Officers*  
Director, Itasca County Probation



Catherine Johnson  
*Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties*  
Director, Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation



Jack J. Swanson  
*Association of Minnesota Counties Public Safety Policy Committee Chair*  
Commissioner, Roseau County