



# Association of Minnesota Counties

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May 10, 2022

Senator Warren Limmer  
Senator David Osmek  
Senator Andrew Mathews  
Senator Ron Latz  
Senator Karla Bigham

Representative Carlos Mariani  
Representative Cedrick Frazier  
Representative Jamie Becker-Finn  
Representative Kelly Moller  
Representative Brian Johnson

Dear Members of the Conference Committee on S.F. 2673/H.F. 4608:

**On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), a voluntary association representing all 87 counties, we want to thank you for your work on the Judiciary and Public Safety omnibus bill.** We appreciate the opportunity to outline our perspective on how various proposals from both the Senate and House versions of S.F. 2673 impact county government and the people we serve.

#### **AMC 2022 Public Safety Priorities**

- **Community Supervision Funding and Formula Change** – Fully funding the state’s commitments to support community corrections and county probation is a top AMC priority this session. AMC supports the community supervision funding in both versions of S.F. 2673. AMC has been advocating for a more equitable funding formula for community supervision for years to ensure that all counties can provide effective supervision practices and keep communities safe. Throughout the last year, counties and other supervision partners worked proactively to identify a compromise agreement that meets the needs of Minnesota. Our proposal protects counties from the need to compete with the state for resources by allocating funding to each county instead of allocating it based on delivery system. It allows each county to choose the best probation solution for its community. The proposal is also one of the best ways to ensure that repeat offenders receive the services they need to never commit another crime, which ultimately protects victims and makes Minnesota safer. ***We implore the Committee to address the critical funding gap, but also to ensure the same situation does not repeat itself in the future by passing the funding policy language in House Article 7 creating one funding formula.***

While AMC appreciates the intent of the House additions to the agreed upon proposal **we do not support substantive changes to the proposal that have not been made by agreement of the main stakeholders of the community supervision system.** Many hours of work went into creating the proposal and finding common ground between opposing viewpoints and we support the collaborative proposal as created by the working group. For that reason, we cannot support the House additions to our proposal related to the elimination of supervision fees, weighting of misdemeanor cases without input of probation stakeholders, and penalties for all periods of incarceration during a probation sentence.

- **Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) Funding** – AMC supports the \$1 million grant program created in *House Article 1, sec. 2, Subd. 7, clause (a)* to reimburse local governments for ARMER radios and other equipment. This provision is desperately need as thousands of emergency radios throughout the state are outdated and close to being unusable. Emergency response radios generally cost more than \$5,000 each making it an untenable cost for many counties and small EMS/Fire stations. We ask that legislative leadership and the Committee consider expanding the committee target to increase the grant amount and meet the estimated state need of at least \$120 million statewide.

### **Other Policy and Finance Provisions**

- **Flexible Public Safety Funding for Local Governments** – AMC supports a coordinated and efficient law enforcement program between the state and local jurisdictions. Counties can best respond to community needs by creating locally tailored public safety initiatives based on data with the support of flexible grant programs. The House proposal includes a number of flexible funding proposals for local governments that we support such as the \$15 million grant program for co-responder models and the \$15 million Emergency Community Safety grant program.
- **Continued Investments in Body Cameras and Data Storage** – AMC supports investments in both the House and Senate proposals for investments in body cameras and data storage for local law enforcement to ensure government transparency and build public trust. We appreciate the recognition of the large cost of data storage related to body camera usage and support the funding for a statewide storage system for such data, or a reimbursement program for local data storage. We ask the legislature to ensure that any statewide storage programs are voluntary for counties due to the work, and investments, many counties have already done to implement body camera programs and create local solutions for data storage.
- **Juvenile Justice and Diversion Programs** – AMC supports expanded prevention and early interventions efforts that will reduce contact with the criminal justice system. We appreciate the funding in the House proposal for juvenile intervention services, mental health services and wellness support for juveniles and families, the crossover and dual status youth model grant program, and the youth development grants. Additionally, we thank both the House and the Senate for including funding for youth intervention programs in the bills.
- **Recruitment and Retention of Law Enforcement and Corrections Professionals** – Counties are facing severe and historic staffing shortages in all sectors, but especially in the public safety and corrections sectors. We support flexible funding to allow counties to address these staffing shortages with local recruitment and retention initiatives. In addition, AMC strongly advocates for enhanced access to mental health treatment services for public safety officers looking to depart their professions via duty disability due to PTSD/mental health crises. Minnesota has witnessed over 600 public safety officer departures due to PTSD in the last 5 years alone. Mental health duty disability departures now represent the vast majority of duty disabilities in the public safety profession. Simply put, these trends are not sustainable if local agencies are to ensure proper staffing and community safety. The Legislature needs to act to require preventative mental health resources as well as opportunities for officers to seek treatment prior to departing their profession.

- **Local Government Emergency Management Grants** – AMC appreciates the acknowledgement by both bodies of the importance of the work of local government emergency managers and the need for dedicated predictable state funding. We ask the Committee to support the Senate proposal of \$3 million for grants in equal amounts (approximately \$30,000) to emergency management departments in the 87 counties, 11 federally recognized tribes, and four cities of the first class, for planning and preparedness activities.
- **Public Defense Services** – AMC supports full state funding of state public defender services.
- **County Attorney Training** – AMC supports the training grants in both bills for Minnesota for prosecutorial and law enforcement training. County attorneys play a pivotal role in public safety and ensuring a just and fair criminal justice system. It is important to ensure that attorneys are trained adequately for that role.
- **Funding for Interstate Transfers Transportation** – AMC supports the funding in Article 1, Sec. 7, subd. 2, that reimburses counties for the costs related to return transportation for probationers in other states subject to the Interstate Compact for Adult Supervision.

**Area of Concern**

- **Red Wing Per Diem Cost Shift** – While we appreciate the funding included in this bill, AMC is disappointed in the proposed cost shift for counties in *House Article 5, sec. 9* in a year with a projected \$9 billion surplus. We oppose this cost shift as it adds to the underfunding of the community corrections systems as many counties pay for this per diem from the community corrections budget.

The Association of Minnesota Counties sincerely appreciates your consideration of these perspectives. Should you have any questions about the information provided above, please do not hesitate to reach out to your local county commissioners or AMC policy analyst Carli Stark at [cstark@mncounties.org](mailto:cstark@mncounties.org) or 651-789-4335.

Sincerely,



Carli Stark  
Public Safety Policy Analyst  
Association of Minnesota Counties

CC: Angela Cook, Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee Administrator  
Jamael Lundy, House Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy Division  
Committee Administrator  
Owen Neubauer, Senate Civil Law and Data Practices Committee Administrator  
Brynn Sias, House Judiciary and Civil Law Division Committee Administrator