



**JEWISH COMMUNITY
RELATIONS COUNCIL**
MINNESOTA & THE DAKOTAS

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April 6, 2021

Chair Carlos Mariani
Minnesota State Capitol

Dear Chair Mariani and Members of the Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas (JCRC), please accept this letter regarding the DE3 Amendment/Omnibus Public Safety bill and its potential impact on the security of Minnesota's Jewish and other vulnerable communities.

As an active member of the Communities Combatting Hate coalition, the JCRC is grateful for the inclusion of several provisions contained within Rep. Frank Hornstein's HF 1691, which strengthens and updates Minnesota's hate crime laws.

Additionally, we are pleased by the ongoing commitment to Minnesota's supplemental nonprofit security grant program, which enables houses of worship and other eligible nonprofits to access funding to make their facilities more secure against the threat of terrorism and other forms of violence.

At the same time, we are very disappointed that the request from Governor Tim Walz, the Department of Public Safety, and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to build out and increase operations for the Fusion Center (Criminal Information Operations Section 24/7 Operation and Build Out) was not included in the DE3 Amendment.

As the designated liaison between law enforcement and Minnesota's Jewish community, the JCRC views the Fusion Center as a potentially critical resource and partnership for ensuring the security of our community and other Minnesotans targeted by hate and violent extremism.

Unfortunately, because the Fusion Center's budget limits its operations to business hours, Monday through Friday, this creates a blind spot in Minnesota's ability to prevent violent crimes. This is particularly concerning given that the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian Sabbath all occur Friday through Sunday. Consequently, several of the most infamous recent attacks against houses of worship, including the bombing of the Dar Al Farooq Islamic Center, the Tree of Life synagogue massacre, and the Sri Lanka Easter suicide bombings all occurred over the weekend.

While there is no such thing as perfect security or intelligence, investing adequate resources to the Fusion Center so that among other things it can



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perform its work when it is most needed is a critically necessary step in the right direction.

Thank you for considering our perspective and your service.

Sincerely,

Ethan Roberts, J.D.
JCRC Director of Government Affairs