



March 6, 2023

Chair Kelly Moller
Public Safety Finance and Policy
Re: HF 855, HF 538, and HF 25 (Frazier)

Chair Moller and Members,

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage offers the following statement in strong support of HF 855, HF 538, and HF 25 (Frazier).

We believe police reform is possible and urgently necessary. The Council fully supports HF 538, requiring the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board to revise the peace officer standards of conduct. We believe it is time for the POST Board to prohibit peace officers from affiliating with, supporting, or advocating for white supremacist groups, causes, or ideologies. In 2020, The Council facilitated community conversations, listening sessions, and survey research across the state. Unfortunately, since that outreach and research took place, our state has witnessed the horrific effects of racial disparities in policing on far too numerous occasions. Last year, we thanked the POST Board for specifying that affiliation with white supremacist and other hate groups violated standards of conduct and was subject to disciplinary action. Now is the time to leave no doubt that our state will work to dissolve any connection between white supremacist groups and our peace officers.

Additionally, the Council believes HF 855 is a good step toward transformative change. We support the establishment of a Public Safety Innovation Board that is inclusive and representative of the diverse communities it serves. We also know that adequate funding and policy support are needed to ensure that inclusivity and representation are maintained.

Real, lasting change happens not just through police accountability reform but also through serious investments in our communities and people committed to making our state more robust and safer. From the beginning of this session, the Council has advocated for funding to increase safety in our communities and prevent community violence. As such, we support HF 25 and HF 855.

During this legislative session, our state has a unique opportunity to solidify changes that positively impact the lives and futures of residents across the state. The Council is hopeful that this committee will pass HF 855, HF 538, and HF 25. Minnesotans of African heritage and other communities of color are seeking lasting, transformative change. Now is the time for substantive action. We thank you for your efforts in improving outcomes for all Minnesotans. Please consider our state agency as a committed partner.

Sincerely,

Linda Sloan | Executive Director
Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage