

HENNEPIN COUNTY
ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Mary F. Moriarty
Hennepin County Attorney
C-2000 Government Center
300 South 6th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55487

3/12/24

Senator Nicole Mitchell
95 University Avenue W., Room 3229
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Esther Agbaje
437 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Mitchell and Representative Agbaje:

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my support for SF3878/HF4043, which reforms prison gerrymandering in our state. As the Hennepin County Attorney, I believe this legislation is essential not just for fairness in representation but also for bolstering public safety in our communities.

Prison gerrymandering distorts our democratic principles, particularly along racial lines. This practice worsens the political disenfranchisement already faced by underrepresented communities due to partisan gerrymandering and census undercounts. This causes communities which hold prisons to gain political power. On the other hand, urban and suburban communities that lack prisons and are populated by increasing numbers of black and brown residents lose out. This leads to these areas being deprived of the resources needed to address the root causes of crime.

Further, the racial disparity in the Minnesota prison population often results from policing and prosecution practices that perpetuate systemic racism. Prison gerrymandering further disenfranchises the communities directly affected by these practices, perpetuating a cycle of injustice.

The proposed legislation is a practical step to break this unjust cycle. By reallocating incarcerated individuals to their last known address in redistricting datasets, we can mitigate the impact of prison gerrymandering on political representation and public safety.

Addressing prison gerrymandering is not only a matter of justice but also a practical step toward building safer and more equitable communities. I appreciate your support for SF3878/HF4043 which I know will positively impact our state.

Sincerely,



Mary F. Moriarty
Hennepin County Attorney