

May 13, 2022

Senator Warren Limmer, Chair
Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy
Room 3221 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Carlos Mariani, Chair
Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy
479 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Limmer, Chair Mariani, and SF2673/HF3894 Conference Committee Members:

The Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA) is an independent, voluntary association representing fifteen of Minnesota's larger and faster growing counties, including four suburban and 11 greater Minnesota counties.

Our members — including ten Community Corrections Act counties, three counties that follow the community probation officer reimbursement model, and two counties that contract with the Department of Corrections — agree that full funding of the state's commitment to community supervision and corrections is a top legislative priority for 2022.

While MICA supports various House and Senate provisions before the conference committee, our comments here pertain to *S.F. 2673, Article 1, Section 7, Subd. 3*, and *H.F. 4608, Article 7*.

Sufficient, equitably distributed state funding for effective, evidence-based community supervision is essential to public safety. We support the Senate's proposed funding levels for FY2023, and the House's proposed funding levels for FY2024 and FY2025 because those amounts, respectively, best align with full funding of the state's commitment. As important, those funding levels are needed to ensure offender accountability, coupled with the behavioral health and rehabilitative services demonstrated to reduce recidivism and put offenders on a more productive path.

In addition to increasing funding, local county control will be best served by creation of a new, singular formula for allocating community supervision and post-release services funding across all counties regardless of county choice of service delivery system.

In the past, a key challenge for counties has been that Department budgets would be increased, while funding for counties was not. As a result, local resources for this important public safety work would either fall short of the level needed to consistently implement best-practice rehabilitation programs, or shift more supervision costs to local property taxpayers.

Allocating funding through a new, singular formula will have several benefits by: (a) putting county funding on a more equal footing with the Department during future state budget decision-making; (b) making funding more predictable and reliable; and (c) flexibly accommodating shifts overtime in county population, choice of delivery system, and caseload complexity and workload.

While inadequate and inconsistent funding has been a central challenge in the past, how those funds are used is also critical to improved outcomes. To that end, counties and other experts have collaborated to review and identify best practices for community corrections and supervision programs. Strengthening the evidenced-based supports available to counties aligns with shared state-county goals for safer, equitable, and effective supervision.

Finally, we respectfully request the conference committee consider modest adjustments to how a formula change balances the need to ensure all counties receive a base funding level with the importance of funding sufficiency for counties that have the highest and most complex supervision workload.

We greatly appreciate that both the House and Senate bills have prioritized public safety, including increased appropriations for and consideration of community corrections and supervision programs.

Thank you Chair Limmer, Chair Mariani, and all conference committee members for your work toward reaching a compromise on SF2673/HF4698.

Sincerely,



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