



MINNESOTA LIBRARY
ASSOCIATION

March 8, 2024

Dear Chair Moller and members of the Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Library Association, we are in support of HF 2828 and HF3672. Safety in libraries for staff and patrons is a priority of the Minnesota Library Association and each library system is approaching this work in their own way. Library safety is a growing concern in all areas of the state.

Libraries are deeply accessible public spaces, allowing all community members to access our services. The vast majority of interactions in library spaces across Minnesota are positive, powerful and life-changing, including getting help with a job search, joining a storytime program, participating in a book club or joining a community meeting. Because of the deeply accessible nature of our spaces – we don't turn anyone away from our services – the challenges that are present in our communities (including mental health challenges, substance use disorder, unhoused neighbors, and gun violence) also come into our public spaces, including libraries.

Unlike private, nongovernmental establishments, who can regulate the carrying of firearms in their spaces, there is no authority for a local governmental unit to ban permitted pistols from being carried into local government-owned or leased buildings and land, which may include libraries. Other governmental facilities, including, most notably, schools, have provisions in state law that permit them to ban dangerous weapons while knowingly on school property.

Local libraries and local jurisdictions know their communities best. Allowing local decision makers the ability to prevent the carrying of firearms and other dangerous weapons, permitted or otherwise, in their libraries, places this responsibility with those most well-equipped to determine the appropriate safety considerations for their communities and provide safe and welcoming spaces to those they serve.

MLA strongly urges the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee to support HF 2828 and HF3672.

Sincerely,

Jodi Grebinoski
MLA President
Library Director
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Sarah Hawkins
MLA Legislative Co-Chair
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