



Association of Minnesota Counties

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May 6, 2019

Senator Warren Limmer
Senator Bruce Anderson
Senator Mark Johnson
Senator Andrew Lang
Senator Ron Latz

Representative Carlos Mariani
Representative John Lesch
Representative Kelly Moller
Representative Dave Pinto
Representative Nick Zerwas

Dear Members of the Conference Committee on S.F. 802 (H.F. 2792):

On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), a voluntary association representing all 87 counties, we want to thank you for your work on the omnibus bill. We appreciate the opportunity to outline our perspective on how various proposals impact county government, for your strong consideration as you move forward.

Local Government Emergency Management Grants

We are appreciative of the inclusion of \$300,000 each year to support grants for local emergency management departments, as well as the legislative funding for the division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management that is included in the House proposal. We believe this is a step in the right direction towards stable funding for state and local emergency management and will ensure that emergency management budgets are less reliant on grant funding that should be coming to counties.

Elimination of Life Without Parole for Juveniles

AMC supports eliminating life without parole as a sentencing option for children. Counties support just and age appropriate accountability measures for children that will ensure every child, regardless of offense, is given a meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturing and rehabilitation. AMC believes the House language will provide that opportunity by allowing for children that commit a crime requiring mandatory life sentences to be considered for release after serving 25 years in prison and demonstrating they have been rehabilitated.

Juvenile Detention Alternatives and Alternatives to Incarceration Grants

AMC supports the inclusion of funds for juvenile detention alternative initiatives and alternatives to incarceration grants. We believe that programs such as these will reduce the contact with the judicial and broader criminal justice system furthering the goal of better using limited resources, reducing collateral consequences of criminal justice involvement, and reducing racial disparities in the system.

Community Supervision

Counties are very appreciative of the recognition from the House of the importance of probation services to our criminal justice system, and the large public safety contribution that county probation systems provide to Minnesota. We would like to thank you for the inclusion of the pre-trial and intensive supervised released (ISR) funds for Community Corrections Act (CCA) counties and County Probation Officers (CPO) in the House version of the bill and hope to see those funds remain in the bill.

AMC has serious concerns regarding a lack of base subsidy appropriations for CCA and CPO counties. The House omnibus bill provides appropriations for an operational increase for the community services division of the Department of Corrections, which is necessary to provide effective community supervision for the probationers served by the DOC. The Senate bill includes appropriations for the increased healthcare costs incurred by the department. **County probation systems have the same operating costs and provide more than 80% of the community supervision services in the state.** When CCA and CPO subsidies do not increase to reflect rising operating budgets, Minnesota counties must increase their support for community supervision budgets which disproportionately affects smaller counties that are unable to make up the difference in cost. **Increased funds are necessary to support basic functions and should be a priority.** We look forward to working with legislators as this session continues to make sure an increase in operating costs is included for all county-based probation systems.

The Association of Minnesota Counties sincerely appreciate your consideration of these perspectives. Should you have any questions about the information provided above, please do not hesitate to reach out to your local county commissioners or AMC policy analyst Carli Stark at cstark@mncounties.org or 651-789-4335.

Sincerely,



Carli Stark
Public Safety Policy Analyst
Association of Minnesota Counties

CC: Angela Cook, Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee Administrator
Jamael Lundy, House Judiciary and Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy Division
Committee Administrator
Rachel Ganani, House Judiciary and Civil Law Division Committee Administrator