



*An Initiative of Minnesota Alliance With Youth*

Dear Representative Long,

Thank you for attending the Minnesota Youth Council Committee (MYCC) hearing on April 26th, 2021, on House File 922. We greatly appreciate your time and dedication to youth in Minnesota and thank you for hearing our comments and feedback on this legislation.

There are many areas of this bill that the MYCC offers our strong support for, as we believe they will have a positive impact on Minnesota youth. Section 1 has our full support, as limiting the use of restraints is important to decrease unnecessary punishment in the juvenile justice system. We believe that the bill moves towards a more locally determined, flexible approach that can best account for the varying nuances in local criminal justice systems. Finally, we support the inclusion of more rehabilitative programs, such as alternative detention pretrial, as solutions to crime. The MYCC thanks you for the inclusion of this in the bill as it helps young people in Minnesota have fewer and better encounters with the Juvenile Justice System.

The MYCC would like to see more specificity in some of the language of this bill as well as an addition of certain policies that make it more equitable for youth. The MYCC would like to see legislative oversight for this bill that includes thorough, yearly, publicly available reports around bias pertaining to race, sex, etc. in order to guarantee accountability. Line 3.3-4.6 explains that there would be an objective risk assessment developed by the commissioner of corrections, county, group of counties, or judicial district, in consultation with the state coordinator or coordinators of the Minnesota Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative. The MYCC would like to see that there be an active inclusion of youth from that locality when creating these instruments to ensure effective accountability by youth. Line 3.13-3.19 mentions that the peace officer can divert a child to either the standard juvenile court proceeding or an alternative program. The MYCC recommends that these peace officers are fully trained to have the expertise to objectively determine when to place juveniles in certain settings.

Thank you again for taking the time to present HF 922 to the Minnesota Youth Council. We are thankful for your support with advocating for a youth-focused bill that has the potential to positively impact the Minnesota juvenile justice system. We look forward to hearing more on the progress of this bill, and hope to continue to support it along the way.

Sincerely,

The Minnesota Youth Council Committee