



*An Initiative of Minnesota Alliance With Youth*

April 4, 2023

Dear Representative Engen,

The Minnesota Youth Council Committee opposes HF 228 as introduced in the 2023-24 legislative session. We believe that this legislation would negatively impact young people in Minnesota.

Lowering the age range of extended jurisdiction juvenile (EJJ) prosecution to include younger children is harmful to youth across the state. Although the extended jurisdiction juvenile designation was created to keep children out of the adult prison system, it has instead become a system that funnels youth into prison. A 2001 study found that more than one third of the youth in the Minnesota EJJ program failed their probation, and 76% of those youth failed due to a technical probation violation rather than a new crime.<sup>1</sup> Technical violations can include not completing court-mandated therapy, failing a drug or alcohol test, or even not meeting high school GPA requirements. From 2016-2021, over one third of extended jurisdiction juveniles were given 5 or more years of parole, which is longer than the max parole length for most adults in Minnesota.<sup>2</sup> The combination of unprecedented parole lengths and excessive technical violations creates a system in which children can be placed in adult prisons for one slip-up. If the age range is expanded for extended juvenile jurisdiction, more youth will likely be forced to experience the trauma of the adult prison system.

We, the Minnesota Youth Council Committee, oppose HF 228, as it would increase the number of young people trapped in the extended probation system. We ask that you consider the impact of this policy change on the lives of young people in the carceral system, those at risk of incarceration, and the youth of Minnesota as a whole.

Sincerely, The Minnesota Youth Council

**Minnesota Alliance With Youth • Minnesota Youth Council**  
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<sup>1</sup> Podkopacz, Marcy R., and Barry C. Feld. "The Back-Door to Prison: Waiver Reform, 'Blended Sentencing,' and the Law of Unintended Consequences." *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* (1973-) 91, no. 4 (2001): 997-1072. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1144155>.

<sup>2</sup> Serres, Chris, et al. "Minnesota's Extended Probation for Youth Becomes 'Back Door to Prison'." *Star Tribune* (2022), <https://www.startribune.com/juvenile-justice-system-minnesota-youth-extended-probation-back-door-to-prison/600235423/>