



April 19, 2021

Kelly McCarthy, Chair
Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training
1600 University Ave, Suite 200
St. Paul, MN 55104-3825

Dear Chair McCarthy and Board Members:

NAMI Minnesota is dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with mental illnesses and their families and in promoting overall good mental health for Minnesotans. This past year has been incredibly difficult due to the impact of the pandemic, the killing of George Floyd and Daunte Wright, and the attacks on the Asian community. And these events have not impacted us equally, with people from our BIPOC communities catching, being hospitalized, and dying from COVID-19 at much higher rates. The pandemic has revealed the underlying racial disparities in access to health care, housing, and economic opportunity. We clearly see the disparities in our state and the racism that permeates our society. Racism and the deaths of these two Black men have added to the stress and have had a profound impact on the mental health of the BIPOC community.

When people are experiencing great stress, pain, and anguish, it helps to come together with others, and as Angela Davis wrote, "it is in collectivities that we find reservoirs of hope and optimism." Thus, it is important as part of the healing process to gather with others. We have seen this happen in South Minneapolis and Brooklyn Center where people brought donations of food and school supplies, where people ate together, cried together, and expressed anger together. People who are gathering need to know that they will be treated with compassion and respect.

We believe it is vitally important that Minnesota have policies that lay out how people who are coming together will be treated. Adding trauma to trauma will not move us forward. NAMI Minnesota supports the efforts to require peace officers to follow their department's policy on interactions with public assemblies and for the POST Board to develop model policies on this issue. Thank you for considering our opinion on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Abderholden".

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director

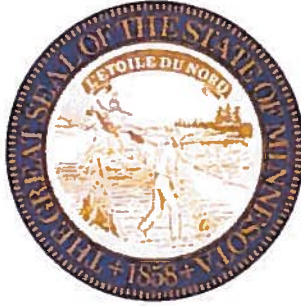


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Melissa Hortman
Speaker of the House

District 36B
Anoka
Hennepin



Minnesota House of Representatives

April 21, 2021

Chair Kelly McCarthy
Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training
1600 University Ave., Suite 200
St. Paul, MN 55104-3825

By electronic delivery

Chair McCarthy,

I write to support the recommendations from the Ensuring Police Excellence and Improving Community Relations Advisory Council that the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board adopt a rule requiring the POST Board to develop a model policy for public assembly response and to immediately require that police officers follow their own local policies for public assembly response or face licensure action.

Minnesotans appreciate police and peace officers who protect and serve all members of our community, and Minnesotans want to feel secure in exercising their First Amendment rights.

A model policy and standard for public assemblies would help to strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and our communities by reaffirming Minnesotans' constitutional right to peacefully protest.

Please share my support with the members of the POST Board. Thank you for your ongoing collaboration with the Legislature and for your efforts to improve law enforcement in our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa Hortman".

Melissa Hortman
Speaker of the House

cc: Governor Tim Walz
Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan





April 21, 2021

Chair Kelly McCarthy
Minnesota Peace Officer Standards and Training Board
1600 University Ave., Suite 200
St. Paul, MN 55104

Chair McCarthy and POST Board Members,

I am writing today to express the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party's strong support for the establishment and enforcement of a minimum First Amendment standard in the licensing of peace officers in our state. As an organization whose continued existence depends upon the First Amendment, we have a stake in ensuring the rights of every entity that advocates for political change be respected, regardless of their ideology. These First Amendment protections are not partisan, rather they are a necessity for the civic health of our nation.

The right of all Americans to peacefully assemble, demonstrate, and protest is sacrosanct and has been the driving force behind many of our nation's greatest advancements in civil and human rights for people of color, women, and the LGBTQ community throughout our nation's history. Similarly, it is essential for members of the media to be able to freely cover these protest movements.

In the aftermath of Daunte Wright's death at the hands of Brooklyn Center law enforcement, Minnesotans peacefully calling for justice for Mr. Wright and journalists covering those protests were frequently met with excessive force that severely and disturbingly curtailed their First Amendment rights to make their voices heard and petition their government for change. This is an untenable situation that the POST Board could solve by enacting and enforcing a clear First Amendment standard when licensing peace officers.

Additionally, we support the creation of a model framework for how all Minnesota law enforcement agencies should best respond to nonviolent assembly and demonstrations. Such a framework would make it easier for different law enforcement agencies to coordinate in response to peaceful protests and ensure peace officers receive the training they need to do their jobs while protecting the civil and human rights of Minnesotans.

We strongly believe that these measures are in the best interests of both the people of Minnesota and our state's law enforcement agents. When peace officers respond to nonviolent demonstrations with force, it erodes trust between law enforcement and Minnesotans, which in turn makes it more difficult for peace officers to protect and serve our communities. Furthermore, a unified standard for how peace officers respond to non-violent protests, developed in conjunction with community leaders, would alleviate the confusion that exists when multiple law enforcement agencies respond to the same event using different playbooks. Far from being anti-law enforcement, as some will doubtlessly and baselessly accuse these proposals of being, we feel they will only serve to make it easier for law enforcement to safely and effectively fill the vital role they play in our society.

The role that peaceful protest and even nonviolent civil disobedience have played in our nation's ongoing struggle to build a more perfect union cannot be overstated. It is essential that these freedoms, as codified in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, are protected. We believe that establishing a clear First Amendment standard for licensed peace officers and developing a unified framework that all law enforcement agencies can use when responding to peaceful demonstrations will go a long way towards establishing those important connections and ensuring every Minnesotan is treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ken Martin
Chairman
Minnesota Democratic Farmer Labor Party



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Walz
Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155-1611

April 22, 2021

Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training
c/o Erik Misselt, Executive Director
1600 University Ave. Suite 200
St. Paul, MN 55104

Members of the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board:

The verdict announced this week is an important step forward for justice in Minnesota. The trial is over, but there remains an urgent need to increase trust and transparency in policing. Seeing accountability in the courtroom for George Floyd, his family, and the community in Minnesota was an important step, but we must aspire to do much more. Your work as members of the POST Board, a duly authorized and empowered professional licensing body, is critical to ensuring the law enforcement profession's legitimacy and Minnesotans' trust in their government. Creating meaningful and transformational change that builds trust will serve the people of Minnesota in communities large and small, as well as Minnesota's more than 10,000 licensed peace officers. The task before you is not easy, and I thank you for your service and leadership.

I request your thoughtful yet expedient consideration and action on the proposals before you. Your action will begin progress toward greater trust and transparency in the profession. I ask you to rise to the moment by implementing bold and responsible proposals to heal divides in Minnesota. One such proposal is the First Amendment standard for public assembly response. As the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage outlined in its letter, law enforcement has the dual responsibility to preserve public safety and protect the constitutional right to demonstrate. I urge you to reflect the public's calls for a more uniform system that establishes sound practices and accountability for law enforcement response to demonstrations.

Extremist ideology is at odds with law enforcement professionals' basic responsibility to protect and serve everyone. To further build trust, and in light of the January 6, 2021 insurgency at our nation's capital, I request that you support the proposal requiring a policy to ban peace officer involvement in extremist organizations.

Finally, to allow the POST Board to adequately perform its work, I strongly encourage you to adopt requirements for more comprehensive complaint and discipline data collection and reporting. This information will help the POST Board identify training needs and develop new professional standards that reflect best practices.

Minnesota faces a moment of reckoning, where the interests and needs of many converge. The watershed events of the last year make it clear that communities of color cannot go on like this. Police

officers also cannot go on like this. While we all hope for change, history tells us that hope is not a strategy. The urgency and need for systemic reforms have never been greater. As members of the POST Board, you are uniquely positioned and empowered with regulatory and rule-making authority to lead on the urgent issues facing the law enforcement profession. You represent a balance of law enforcement leaders committed to serving our communities with integrity and respect, educational institutions preparing the current and next generations of peace officers, and community leaders from all walks of life and all corners of Minnesota.

The POST Board has a monumental task ahead of it, but it also has an opportunity to transform policing in Minnesota. I ask you to continue the work of rebuilding, restoring, and reimagining the relationship between law enforcement professionals and the communities that they serve. Thank you, again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. J. Walz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "J" followed by "Walz".

Tim Walz
Governor