

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**JUSTICE FOR ALL COALITION PUSHES FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE
POLICIES AT THE CAPITOL WITH SENATOR CLARE OUMOU
VERBETEN & REPRESENTATIVE DAVE PINTO**

Advocates, lawmakers, and community leaders voice support for legislation that improves data collection, provides support to crime victims, and ensures fairness in the justice system.

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Saint Paul, MN—Tuesday, members of the Justice for All Coalition convened at the Minnesota State Capitol for their Day on the Hill. They were joined by State Senator Clare Oumou Verbeten, State Representative Dave Pinto, and other key advocates and organizers to discuss the meaningful changes in Minnesota’s criminal legal system that are on the table this session.

The coalition discussed the importance of passing the [Pretrial Data Collection Bill](#) which will improve data collection in the pretrial system and the [Crime Victim Services Funding Bill](#) which will provide direct support to crime victims; both bills will enhance fairness in Minnesota’s criminal legal system.

The Pretrial Data Collection Bill ensures that all counties collect and share data related to pretrial bail cases that can be analyzed and used to devise improvements. Accurate, accessible, and consistent data is essential for improving our pretrial practices, understanding how our current system operates, and navigating away from a system that does not prioritize public safety but instead undermines fairness and drains resources from individuals, families, and communities.

The Crime Victim Services (CVS) Funding Bill would ensure that we renew state-level funding to CVS, as we anticipate that the federal government will cut funding by an additional 40% this year.

“We all need to step up. If we’re going to say that we care about public safety and we care about victims, we need to fund this crucial work.” **said State Senator Clare**

Oumou Verbeten, who is the senate author of the Pretrial Data Collection Bill and the Crime Victim Services Funding Bill, “So many of us have been impacted by this issue, whether personally or having loved ones who are survivors. I think it's really important that when people reach out for support, they receive it, and they can't receive that support if there's no funding to do so.”

“Too often, decisions on pretrial release and bail-setting are based on guesswork, assumptions, or even stereotypes,” said **Rep. Dave Pinto (DFL-St. Paul), the House author of the Pretrial Data Collection Bill** and a prosecutor with Ramsey County. “And that's just as true with respect to policy in this area. It's critical that we have real information to make well-informed decisions about such critical issues.”

“The problem is that the one time funds are going away and the federal funding still hasn't come back up to what it was previously at. So we're facing a bit of an inflection point in our movement where we have to continue asking our state partners to keep filling these programs with the money they need.” **said Jess Palyan of Violence Free Minnesota**. “One of our shelters in the suburbs had to turn away 78% of people last year because they didn't have enough beds. Many of our rural programs only have one advocate to cover a whole county. So for them, layoffs doesn't just mean, oh, there's going to be less people to take care of you. It means nobody is there for an entire county.”

Throughout the day, advocates and organizers met with legislators and testified to support these bills before the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee. Those who testified emphasized that these legislative actions are critical for Minnesota to advance fairness in the legal system, reduce unnecessary incarceration, and ensure crime victims receive the support they need.

“You have to remember that when we're talking about the disproportionate impact of pretrial or not funding crime victim services, those are the folks that are being come for right now.” **said Justin Terrell, Executive Director of the Minnesota Justice Research Center**, “We have to make sure that we work together to make sure that our systems of administering justice in our communities actually function that way.”

“Across the US, incarcerating people before trial costs about \$14 billion each year, and that's a lot of money and it's not working very well,” **said Anna Hall, Defense Attorney and MNJRC Research Lead**. “When we're deciding who goes free pretrial, we don't know a lot about our pretrial system. But what the Minnesota Justice Research Center has been able to pull together shows us that in Minnesota we are disproportionately detaining Black, Indigenous and rural Minnesotans. That's not okay. Our system is not working. That harms our families, it harms our communities, and it harms public safety.”

ABOUT THE JUSTICE FOR ALL COALITION: *The **Justice for All Coalition** is a group of Minnesotans committed to transforming the criminal legal system to ensure fairness, transparency, and public trust in the administration of justice.*

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