



**TO:** Co-Chair Novotny, Co-Chair Moller, and members of the Minnesota House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee

**FROM:** Adzi Vokhiwa, Vice President of Policy

**DATE:** April 2, 2025

**RE:** Opposition to HF2532

On behalf of Community Justice Action Fund, I submit this written testimony in strong opposition to HF2532. Critical public safety resources passed last biennium for community violence intervention (CVI) programs in Minnesota should not be rolled back, and this bill would do just that.

Community Justice Action Fund is a national organization that partners with communities to secure the investments and policy changes needed to tackle this gun violence epidemic through people-centered public health strategies.

CVI programs are a proven, life-saving approach to reducing gun violence and fostering safer neighborhoods. By engaging trusted community members—such as violence interrupters, outreach workers, and mentors—CVI programs address the root causes of violence before it escalates. These initiatives provide critical resources, including conflict mediation, job training, mental health support, and education, that help individuals who are at high-risk of perpetuating violence or being victimized to find alternatives to violence. CVI strategies are informed by public health models and provide culturally competent, trauma-responsive services that are proven to reduce gun violence, shift community norms, and improve the outcomes and resiliency of gun violence survivors.

In 2023, most cities across the country began experiencing historic reductions in violent crime, reversing the trend seen during the first several years of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting data indicated a 3 percent decline in violent crime and a nearly 12 percent decline in murder from 2022 to 2023 nationwide.<sup>1</sup> In the following year, from 2023 to 2024, violent crime decreased by 10.3 percent and murder decreased almost 23 percent nationally.<sup>2</sup> These declines did not happen by chance; they are the result of an intentional, coordinated, comprehensive effort to reduce gun violence including federal, state, and local investments in CVI.

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<sup>1</sup> The Violent Crime Reduction Steering Committee. (2025, 16 January). *Implementation of the Department of Justice's Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Violent Crime*. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/archives/media/1384801/dl>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

We are living in a time when gun violence is now the leading cause of death for children and teens in the United States, surpassing car accidents and cancer. This is to say nothing of the financial costs of community violence—America’s gun violence crisis costs survivors, families, and communities over \$550 billion dollars every year. In response, our leaders must invest heavily in community-based violence prevention programs informed by proven public health strategies, and these strategies require consistent funding.

HF2532 would deprive Minnesota of vital public safety resources and make our communities less safe - we urge the committee to oppose this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.