

# GIFFORDS CENTER FOR VIOLENCE INTERVENTION



## LETTER OF OPPOSITION RE: HF 2532 (NOVOTNY)

**TO:** MINNESOTA HOUSE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

**SUBMITTED BY:** MIKE MCLIVELY, POLICY DIRECTOR  
GIFFORDS CENTER FOR VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

**DATE:** April 1st, 2025

---

### Re: Opposition to HF 2532 (Novotny)

Dear Members of the Committee,

On behalf of GIFFORDS Center for Violence Intervention, which is part of GIFFORDS, the national gun violence prevention organization founded by former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords, **I am writing to express our strong opposition to HF 2532, which would completely defund critical public safety programs in Minnesota.** Gun violence—now the leading cause of death for children and teens in the United States—is an ongoing public health and public safety crisis.<sup>1</sup> Last year, Minnesota suffered 165 homicides statewide and hundreds more non-fatal shootings.<sup>2</sup> The devastating effects of these losses and injuries continue to ripple through entire communities.

However, those numbers also represent recent progress: a nearly 10% reduction in statewide homicides compared to 2023 and a 17% reduction from the totals seen in 2021. In St. Paul, non-fatal shootings in the first half of 2024 were **down more than 60% from the same period in 2021.**<sup>3</sup> This progress has come as Minnesota has made record investments in community-based public safety strategies, including the Legislature’s allocation of \$75 million in 2023 to the **Community Crime and Violence Prevention grant program**, operated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety’s Office of Justice Programs.

To date, this program has directed nearly \$32 million to more than 100 programs around Minnesota in order to “fund community-based programs that operate crime or violence

---

<sup>1</sup> Johns Hopkins, Bloomberg School of Public Health, New Report Highlights U.S. 2022 Gun-Related Deaths: Firearms Remain Leading Cause of Death for Children and Teens, and Disproportionately Affect People of Color, Sept. 12, 2024,

<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2024/guns-remain-leading-cause-of-death-for-children-and-teens>.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Ingraham, Crime falls again in 2024, Minnesota Reformer, Jan. 22, 2025,

<https://minnesotareformer.com/2025/01/22/crime-falls-again-in-2024>.

<sup>3</sup> Mara Gottfried, Youth programming key to keeping lid on summer gun violence, Pioneer Press, May 24, 2024, <https://www.twincities.com/2024/05/24/st-paul-gun-violence-youth-programming-prevention>.

prevention and intervention programs that provide direct services to community members.”<sup>4</sup> As investment in these community-based strategies has reached an all-time high in the US in recent years, many cities are achieving low levels of violent crime not seen in decades.

It’s important to note that, while much serious violence is concentrated in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, **more than a third of overall homicides take place in other parts of Minnesota and in more rural settings, including on tribal lands.** The Community Crime and Violence Prevention grant program is a vital source of support to community-based public safety efforts in those very areas, with recent awards made to entities including: the City of Brooklyn Park, Cass County Probation Department, Crow Wing County Victim Services, Inc., Goodhue County Court Services, Kandiyohi County, Red Wing Youth Outreach, and Roseville Police Department.<sup>5</sup>

These investments recognize the role of community-based public safety strategies as an effective complement to traditional law enforcement efforts—but these solutions require consistent funding. With the upcoming expiration of federal American Rescue Plan Act funds,<sup>6</sup> the loss of Congressional Directed Spending, and ongoing budget freezes and proposed cuts at the federal level, it is more important than ever that state governments maintain their investments in community-based violence intervention and prevention strategies.

Despite this, HF 2532 would entirely defund this program and redirect \$42M back to the state’s general fund, where those dollars could be used for a host of purposes other than public safety. Defunding the **Community Crime and Violence Prevention grant program** would move Minnesota in the wrong direction, endanger lives, and undo the significant progress made since the spike in violence seen in 2020 with the onset of the Covid pandemic and the murder of George Floyd.<sup>7</sup> **This is why we strongly urge you to reject this dangerous piece of legislation.**

Thank you for your time and consideration,

**Mike McLively**  
**Policy Director**  
**Giffords Center for Violence Intervention**

---

<sup>4</sup> Delaware Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs, Community Crime Intervention and Prevention Grant Program Grants, 2024, <https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/assets.dps.mn.gov/s3fs-public/migrated-files/divisions/ojp/grants/Documents/Community%20Crime%20Website%20Update%202024.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Id.

<sup>6</sup> National Association of Counties, Countdown to the ARPA SLFRF obligation deadline, Nov. 14, 2024, <https://www.naco.org/news/countdown-arpa-slfrf-obligation-deadline-what-counties-need-know-december-31-2024#:~:text=While%20counties%20have%20until%20December,potential%20impact%20on%20local%20communities>.

<sup>7</sup> Elliot Hughes and Jeff Hargarten, 5 takeaways from 2024 crime trends in the Twin Cities, Feb. 18, 2025, <https://www.startribune.com/5-takeaways-from-2024-crime-trends-in-the-twin-cities/601224684>.