



CASS COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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April 1, 2025

Minnesota House of Representatives
Minnesota House Public Safety Committee
Minnesota State Capital
St Paul, Minnesota

Re: Written Testimony on Cass County's and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Impact of HF 2532

Dear Public Safety Committee and members of the House of Representatives,

I am writing this letter on the consequences of HF 2532 and the impact on Cass County and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. Cass County applied and received a \$250,000.00 two-year grant from the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs to operate a pretrial supervision program from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025. We have received grant funding from the Community Crime Intervention and Prevention Program since 2015. This grant has allowed Cass County to hire 1 FTE probation officer to work directly with people in Cass County and serve as the program evaluator. Cass County partners with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe on criminal justice issues. Over 10 years ago, Cass County and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe wanted to address pretrial supervision to provide bail evaluations (validated in 2019) and supervision on clients charged with crimes of violence. Our goal being to improve attendance at court hearings and reduce unlawful behavior. We emphasized the importance for people to begin addressing their needs including mental health services, chemical dependency treatment, employment, housing, and transportation. We believe that people who get involved with the criminal justice system, and get access to services earlier, would increase prosocial behavior and reduce recidivism.

The following are the number of bail evaluations on individuals completed in the past 3 years along with average daily bookings and jail populations.

Year	Bail Evaluations	Average caseloads	Pretrial Violations
2024	252	110	37
2023	264	131	47
2022	426	177	56

Year	Average Daily Bookings	Average Jail Population
2024	2.63	34.58
2023	3.27	43.61
2022	4.20	54.16

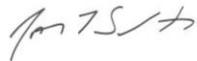
As of February 2025, we have 116 people under pretrial supervision. 61% of our clients are Native Americans.

Public safety is serviced by this OJP grant as we work directly with people charged with violent crimes in Cass County. We recognize the need for everyone to be entitled to public safety. It starts with a call to law enforcement, moves to investigations and victim notification, determining arrest for crimes of violence, drafting criminal complaints, to arraignment hearings. Each morning, our pretrial agent completes an in-person intake, completes a validated bail evaluation and facilitates a person's own intrinsic motivation for change. We ensure compliance with release conditions and assist clients to be successful on pretrial supervision.

Eliminating this grant opportunity in the future would negatively impact Cass County and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and would put this program in jeopardy of discontinuing. The outcomes speak for themselves: a declining booking average, substantial reduction in our jail population and addressing our overrepresentation of Native American clients demonstrates our success.

I appreciate your consideration and welcome any questions.

With kind regards,



Jim Schneider
Director

Cc/Cass County Board of Commissioners