



February 25, 2025

House of Representatives Public Safety Finance and Policy
Minnesota State Capitol
75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Novotny and Members of the Committee,

Minnesota Family Council represents tens of thousands of families across the state, and we **urge you to support H.F. 435.**

Minnesota Correctional Facility-Shakopee (MCF-Shakopee) has existed since 1920, when it was opened specifically for women to be housed separately from men.¹ Most incarcerated females will reenter society after serving their term, and the state carries the responsibility to prepare these women for reintegration. Incarcerated women have a right to serve out their sentence in a safe environment, free from incarcerated male access.

Contrary to the prison's history, Shakopee has housed males with the female inmates in recent years. *Alpha News* reported in September 2024 that Shakopee has housed or is currently housing at least 5 males within its facility.² Incarcerated females often have a history of sexual abuse survivorship. Rebeca Wambo, formerly incarcerated at Shakopee, reported to *Reduxx*, "The male transfers are making [the women incarcerated in Shakopee] feel 'unsafe' and 'scared' for their lives."³ One incarcerated woman at Shakopee named Janice shared with *Reduxx*, "...like most inmates there is a fear of speaking up or voicing those concerns because of potential retaliation, or because people will think you are being discriminatory or judgmental."

This is an additional layer of punishment in these women's sentences. Since Shakopee provides security at all levels of custody, women face varying levels of interaction with incarcerated males depending upon their sentencing. The Department of Corrections released its inmate policy regarding trans-identified inmates first in January 2023 and the revised version in April 2024.⁴ **Incarcerated women at Shakopee now face high risk of sexual violence, a punishment which was not a part of their sentencing.**

Minnesota Family Council has been advocating for the women housed at the Shakopee Correctional Facility to be entitled to the basic safety of a separate space from incarcerated males.⁵ Who will be the voice of justice for these women? Surely the legislature can protect them in statute.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Delahunt
Director of Public Policy, Minnesota Family Council

¹Daly, T. (2025, February 11). For the Good of the Women: A Short History of the Minnesota Correctional Facility Shakopee. St. Paul. Retrieved February 24, 2025, <https://libguides.mnhs.org/prison/shakopee>

²Collin, L. (2024, September 12). *Exclusive: Minnesota DOC employee quits after male inmates allowed in women's prison*. Alpha News. <https://alphanews.org/exclusive-minnesota-doc-employee-quits-after-male-inmates-allowed-in-womens-prison/>

³Gluck, G. (2024, October 16). *Exclusive: Female inmates in Minnesota say trans-identified male transfers make them feel "scared" and "unsafe."* Reduxx. <https://reduxx.info/exclusive-female-inmates-in-minnesota-say-trans-identified-male-transfers-make-them-feel-scared-and-unsafe/>

⁴<https://policy.doc.mn.gov/DOCPolicy/PolicyDoc?name=202.045.pdf>

⁵MNHouseInfo. (2024, May 6). *House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee 5/6/24*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/_yqvrG6KOKg?t=1558