



Minnesota Coalition
for Battered Women

DATE: February 29, 2016

TO: Honorable Senator Ron Latz

CC: DOC Commissioner Tom Roy; DPS Commissioner Mona Dohman; Raeone Magnuson, OJP Director

RE: Feedback on Prison Reform Proposal

Chair Latz:

Thank you again for the opportunity to be a part of the Prison Population Taskforce. Per your request, we are providing feedback on the Prison Reform Proposal for your consideration.

Suggested Change in the Current Prison Reform Proposal:

- **Issue:** On page 2 of 4 of the Proposal, there is a recommendation to “appropriate money to the DOC for increased mental health and CD treatment services.”
- **Recommended Change:** “Appropriate money to DOC and DPS for increased mental health, ~~and~~ CD treatment and domestic abuse programming.”
- **Rationale for Recommended Change:**
 - Approximately **70% of offenders in DOC custody have histories of domestic violence perpetration – whether their controlling offense be for DWI, drugs or domestic/sexual violence.**¹
 - Yet, there is **no statutorily compliant domestic abuse programming within DOC facilities**, and very little **statutorily compliant domestic abuse programming in the community**. This is because **there are no legislatively appropriated resources specifically for domestic abuse programming**.
 - We need comprehensive offender programming to address victim safety, offender accountability, and prison population reduction. **While important, chemical dependency and mental health treatment do not appropriately address offenders’ decisions to use violence against their intimate partners, nor do they comply with statutory requirements for domestic abuse programming. Additionally, because victim services are a key component to victim safety, DPS, which funds victim services, should be a partner with DOC in the receipt of any appropriation and the development of domestic abuse programming.** Comprehensive offender programming must include:
 - Domestic abuse programming (“batterer intervention programming”) in compliance with the standards set forth in Minn. Stat. 518B.02, subd.2;
 - Culturally-specific and -appropriate programming, both within DOC facilities and broadly available in the community;
 - Community supervision and monitoring of offenders with histories of domestic violence perpetration in coordination with other victims services programming; and
 - Chemical dependency/mental health treatment and educational/vocational opportunities.

We look forward to the inclusion of our suggestions in your final Prison Reform Proposal. Thank you again.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Richards
Executive Director

Rebekah Moses
Program Manager – Public Policy

¹ Data resulting from an analysis of offenders in St Louis and Hennepin Counties, DOC grant from the the Department of Justice to analyze the safety of victims of incarcerated offenders.