

March 11, 2024

The Honorable Erin Murphy
Minnesota State Senate Majority Leader
3113 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Tim Walz
Minnesota State Governor
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., #130
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Letter in Opposition to Repealing School Ban on Prone Restraints in HF 3489 / SF 3534

Dear Senate Majority Leader Erin Murphy and Governor Tim Walz,

We create truly safe schools when we provide physical, psychological, and emotional safety for all students. As local elected officials serving in school districts, towns, cities, and counties across the great state of Minnesota, **we urge you to oppose HF 3489 / SF 3534, which would repeal the ban prohibiting school-based law enforcement from using prone restraints on students.**

Local Progress is a movement of more than 1,400 local elected officials across 48 states and DC advancing a racial and economic justice agenda through all levels of local government. As the LP leadership body for the state of Minnesota, we represent our mighty membership of over 80 local elected officials across the state, including nearly 20 school board members. As local leaders, we are the ones closest to the communities; we intimately know and understand our constituents' fears, concerns, and hopes. **Our communities do not support a policy that makes children unsafe at school.**

Almost four years ago, our state faced a reckoning after the police murder of George Floyd that reverberated across the nation. We were forced to confront just how ingrained racism and violence are in our public safety systems. We mourned, and we took action. **The restraint that this bill would allow school-based law enforcement to use on children is dangerously similar to the restraint that killed George Floyd.** It was banned in schools less than a year ago because it was deemed lethal and unnecessary. Reversing this common sense ban not only goes against our values as Minnesotans, but it is also incredibly dangerous.

The bottom line is that prone restraints kill. We know that students with disabilities, Black students, and indigenous students are [far more likely](#) to be subjected to these restraints in Minnesota. Moreover, we know that these restraints often result in [serious injuries](#) and in some cases, [death](#). That's why [37 states](#) ban the use of prone restraints, or any type of restraint that restricts breathing. In fact, less than a year ago, Minnesota [joined](#) this rank of states. Reversing that decision would endanger our children and young people.

We are asking you to please listen to students. You cannot ignore the chorus of fear like that of sixth-grader Simon, who identifies as autistic, who recently [told](#) legislators, "Kids don't want to be

restrained in school. Kids want to feel safe. Using prone restraint never, ever helps a kid calm down. It just makes things worse."

Rejecting HF 3489 / SF 3534 is a critical opportunity to lead with an affirmative vision of school safety – to do more of what we know works: trauma-informed care and counseling, mental health services, restorative practices, wraparound services, and afterschool programming. Our children are counting on us. Let's show them that we are listening.

We urge your immediate opposition.

Sincerely,

The Local Progress Minnesota Organizing Committee:

Mitra Jalali, St. Paul City Council President (Co-Chair)
Robyn Gulley, West St. Paul City Councilmember (Co-Chair)
Mai Chong Xiong, Ramsey County Commissioner
Thomas Brooks, Osseo School Board Member
Kimberly Wilburn, Minnetonka City Councilmember
Azrin Awal, Duluth City Councilmember At Large
Jen Westmoreland, Hopkins School Board Member
Elliott Payne, Minneapolis City Council President

About Local Progress Minnesota (LPMN)

LPMN organizes local elected officials across the state to share best practices and policy solutions across our counties, cities, towns, and school boards. LPMN currently has more than 80 members, representing the Twin Cities metro area and Greater Minnesota. The LPMN Organizing Committee are LPMN's member leaders who drive the strategic vision for Local Progress' work in the state.

About the Bill

See full summary [here](#)

In 2023, the legislature ruled that employees or agents of a school district, including school resource officers (SROs), were prohibited from using certain holds, including prone restraints, except when it was necessary to restrain a student to prevent bodily harm or death to the student or another. [HF 3489](#) / [SF 3534](#) removes SROs from the category of an "agent of the school," thereby authorizing them to use such restraints. It also removes the requirement that a threat of bodily injury or death "imminent" before a teacher or principal can use reasonable force on a student to prevent injury or death to the student or another. The bill would also establish training requirements for SROs, policy requirements for law enforcement agencies, and contract requirements for agreements between schools or districts and law enforcement agencies for providing SROs.