

to the House Judiciary Committee

Chair Williamson, vice chairs Sprenger and Gorsek and members of the committee

I wish to testify in support of HB 3224, which would increase the accountability of every District Attorney's office across the state. It would require all DA's to have written policies, available to the public which would spell out how they carry out their responsibilities. Currently many offices have no written policies at all. This leaves everyone in the dark about what is happening and what to expect.

Written policies would provide vital information to the accused person, the defense attorneys, victims, family members and other advocates. Without documented procedures, no one knows what to expect or how to find out. We need clear standards about how the DA's and their deputies are using the tremendous discretion they have in charging decisions, terms of plea bargains, a use of diversion programs and other alternatives to incarceration..

Everyone would profit from more transparency created by publicly available policies. This would increase the public's trust in their elected officials. It would help staff know that they are following thoughtfully developed guidelines.

I feel this will be very helpful to juveniles, their parents and their grandparents.

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