



February 20, 2026

Rep. Ron Kresha, Co-Chair
House Education Finance Committee
Centennial Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Cheryl Youakim, Co-Chair
House Education Finance Committee
Centennial Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chairs Kresha and Youakim:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are submitting this letter to the House Education Finance Committee to highlight the urgent need in Minnesota to make sure students in all our schools are secure and safe, particularly given recent horrific attacks in Minnesota and across the country. We believe that the state must play a leading role in ensuring all students – regardless whether they attend public, charter, or nonpublic schools – are safe and secure in our schools.

For background, there are approximately 72,000 students enrolled in Independent, Catholic, Jewish, Christian, Lutheran, and Islamic nonpublic schools in our state. In Minnesota, as you know, too many of our schools have experienced security issues. We believe that by creating a system where some students are safe while others are less secure creates targets for nefarious actors to cause significant harm to students and staff. Legislators should commit themselves to equity in student safety funding.

Back in 2023, nonpublic schools directly advocated with Gov. Walz to include nonpublic schools in a program proposed by his administration called the Building and Cyber Security Grant Program. Unfortunately, in the end, nonpublic schools were not included in this program. And since 2020, nonpublic schools have been advocating to be part of the Safe Schools Program that provides funding to school districts for emergency response training, security upgrades, mental health services and security resources. This legislation was re-introduced this year under HF3493 (Lawrence), among several bills appropriated funding for safe schools.

We urge the committee to consider moving legislation and funding forward that includes safe school funding for all schools and students in all sectors – public, nonpublic, charter, independent, cooperative, and tribal schools. Legislation aimed to protect and allocate funding to some schools but not all only makes the schools who are unfunded as vulnerable against future tragedies. This is unacceptable.

We cannot change the terrible tragedies that have fallen on our schools in the past 20 years, but we can change the future and prevent these tragedies from happening in the first place. We strongly urge you to take action and provide this critical funding for all schools this legislative session.

Respectfully,

Tim Benz
President
MINNDEPENDENT

Jason Adkins
Executive Director
Minnesota Catholic Conference

Ethan Roberts
Director of Government Affairs
Jewish Community
Relations Council

Zaheer Baber
President
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Dan Beckering
Head of School, SW Christian HS
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Sean Martens
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