



October 24, 2025

Minnesota Advisory Committee on Capitol Area Security

Re: Public Comment

Dear Lieutenant Governor Flanagan and Members of the Advisory Committee on Capitol Area Security,

My name is Liuba Grechen Shirley, and I am the Founder and CEO of Vote Mama Lobby. I am submitting this letter on behalf of the organization in strong support of stricter safety measures to protect candidates and officeholders in Minnesota.

We are living in a general threat environment, where public servants are being targeted at alarming rates and are fearful for their safety. Harassment, threats, and attempts at violence against candidates, especially women and parents, have steadily increased across all levels of government. For candidates with young children, these dangers extend beyond personal risk and threaten the safety of their families, often pushing them out of public life altogether.

A [2024 report by The Brennan Center for Justice](#) documents the rising levels of abuse directed at state and local officeholders. Below are some key findings from the report:

- State and local officeholders report alarming, increasing levels of threats and other abuse.
 - 43% of state legislators experienced threats.
 - 38% of state legislators reported that the amount of abuse they experience has increased since first taking public office, while only 16% reported that it has decreased.
 - 29% of state legislators reported that the seriousness of the incidents has increased, while only 12% reported that it has decreased.
- Abuse threatens the free and fair functioning of democracy.
 - More than 40% of local officeholders said they were less willing to run for reelection or higher office at the time they were surveyed because of abuse. For women, the rates of possible attrition are higher, with approximately half saying they were less willing to continue serving.

The crisis of political violence in Minnesota is painfully clear after the recent attacks on June 14, 2025, against Rep. Melissa Hortman and her husband, who were assassinated, and Senator John Hoffman and his wife, who were critically injured. We commend this Committee for its commitment to strengthen security measures at the State Capitol.

Vote Mama Lobby is the only organization working to authorize Campaign Funds for Security in all 50 states - because no parent should ever have to worry about their family's safety while on the campaign trail. Campaign Funds for Security (CFS) is a common-sense solution that empowers candidates and officeholders to use campaign funds to cover security expenses at no cost to tax-payers.



In 2024, the [Federal Election Commission \(FEC\) issued guidance](#), clarifying that all federal candidates and officeholders **may use campaign funds to pay for security measures so long as the expenses address ongoing threats or dangers directly related to their candidacy or role in public office**. Permissible security expenses include, but are not limited to: non-structural security devices; structural security devices; security personnel; and cybersecurity software, devices, and services.

I urge the Minnesota Advisory Committee on Capitol Area Security to review the Minnesota statute on campaign finance to expand and align state law with federal guidance. State and local candidates and officeholders should be able to use their campaign funds on all types of security expenses directly related to their campaign for office or their duties as an elected official.

Campaign Funds for Security is a bipartisan initiative for moms and dads alike.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liuba Grechen Shirley', written in a cursive style.

Liuba Grechen Shirley
Founder and CEO, Vote Mama Lobby