2025 Senate Expedition Briefing Book

Guiding Question:
"Does the budget of the state of Minnesota match the values of the state?"

Open World Learning Community
Integrated Math 1



Dear Reader,

For much of a school year, compulsory education can feel like solving problems divorced from their world, a necessary practice in perseverance, yet sometimes lacking inherent meaning. This project was born from the question: How could we turn this potential compulsion into an undeniable attraction? How could we provide space and support, not to influence their approach, but to ignite their own?

My students want to make a difference. They yearn to address the very real issues they see around them: homelessness, the safety of their communities, access to clean water, a better future for all, from those struggling with literacy to those battling addiction. And these students, these 7th and 8th graders delving into topics of genuine interest, are future voters. My endeavor as their teacher is to empower them, to equip them with the tools to understand how they can have a voice in the world they will inherit.

So, instead of simply teaching about correlation, we ask: "Does the budget of the state of Minnesota truly reflect its values?" By examining trends in state spending alongside the very issues they care about, they can move beyond abstract concepts and craft arguments grounded in data. The Briefing Book you hold represents months of their work, a culmination of research, writing, and the essential process of revision, revision, revision. This Book contains their data, their story, their interpretation, and their call to action.

They often begin by viewing the prospect of presenting their findings to policymakers in the Capitol as an insurmountable obstacle. Yet, they want to make a difference, and this project offers them that opportunity. Years ago, a student who undertook this very process went on to contribute to changing the smoking age in Minnesota. While I cannot claim direct causation, that student experienced firsthand what was possible when their understanding was applied to real-world change. Who knows what other obstacles these young people will overcome when they realize the power of their informed voices?

Are their positions always perfectly polished? Perhaps not; they are, after all, just 13 and 14 years old. Their understanding of complex policies may still be developing. But if you engage with their work, if you seek to understand the earnestness behind their findings, you will see their potential. Engage, learn, and share the hope that the future is indeed bright with these thoughtful and dedicated young people.

Thomas Totushek
National Board-Certified Mathematics Teacher
Open World Learning Community, a Saint Paul Public School

Name	District	Group
Abby H.	67A	2
Abby S.	67A	8
Aeris H.	66A	11
Alex M.	66B	15
Amalena X.	67B	10
Asa H.D.	66A	3
Ash B.	64A	9
Azriella B.	67B	4
Benjamin A.	64A	12
Brogan B.G.	66A	12
Caleb M.	67B	6
Carmela M.	65B	15
Caroline A.	65A	8
Charlie C.	64A	13
Charlie S.	64A	18
Chloe A.B.	65A	10
Clare E.	64B	14
Cooper S.	64A	7
Cora H.	65B	11
Crosby A.	64B	17
Day L.	67A	2
Dominic S.	64B	13
Edison K.	64B	1
Ehna S.	66B	2
Frances H	66B	4
Gigi W.	65B	11
Hannah L.	64A	4
Henry B.	64B	6
Henry H.	64B	3
Ian C.	65B	5
Ian N.	66B	1
Isabella C.	64B	8
Jacob A.	66A	18
Jasper B.	65B	9
Josey P.	67B	14

Name	District	Group
Khalyl C.	65B	18
Kola O.	67A	1
Lajlim K.	67A	18
Lauren H.	67B	2
Leo C.	67A	12
Leo M.	66A	5
Lily K.	66B	7
Luca L.	65B	13
Luci H.	65B	7
Luisa S.	64A	7
Lukas C.	67B	5
Marcus R.	64A	6
Miles H.	66A	16
Misk S.	66A	8
Oliver F.	64B	17
Oskar G.D	64B	13
Oskar H.M.	64B	6
Padraig T.	67B	17
Penelope L.	65B	16
Piper W.	66B	10
Reign M.	65B	17
Sam C.	64A	12
Sam J.	64B	16
Sam O.	65B	4
Sami K.	64A	15
Savannah Y.	47B	10
Si P.	65B	11
Sophia S.H.	66B	14
Tallie W.	65B	16
Talulah K.	64A	14
Talulah K.	66A	14
Touly V.	67A	15
Vaughn N.	66B	16
William S.	66B	3
Zander S.	64B	5

Student	District	Group
Savannah Y.	47B	10
Hannah L.	64A	4
Marcus R.	64A	6
Cooper S.	64A	7
Luisa S.	64A	7
Ash B.	64A	9
Benjamin A.	64A	12
Sam C.	64A	12
Charlie C.	64A	13
Talulah K.	64A	14
Sami K.	64A	15
Charlie S.	64A	18
Edison K.	64B	1
Henry H.	64B	3
Zander S.	64B	5
Henry B.	64B	6
Oskar H.M.	64B	6
Isabella C.	64B	8
Dominic S.	64B	13
Oskar G.D	64B	13
Clare E.	64B	14
Sam J.	64B	16
Crosby A.	64B	17
Oliver F.	64B	17
Caroline A.	65A	8
Chloe A.B.	65A	10
Sam O.	65B	4
Ian C.	65B	5
Luci H.	65B	7
Jasper B.	65B	9
Cora H.	65B	11
Gigi W.	65B	11
Si P.	65B	11
Luca L.	65B	13
Carmela M.	65B	15
Penelope L.	65B	16
Tallie W.	65B	16
Reign M.	65B	17
Khalyl C.	65B	18

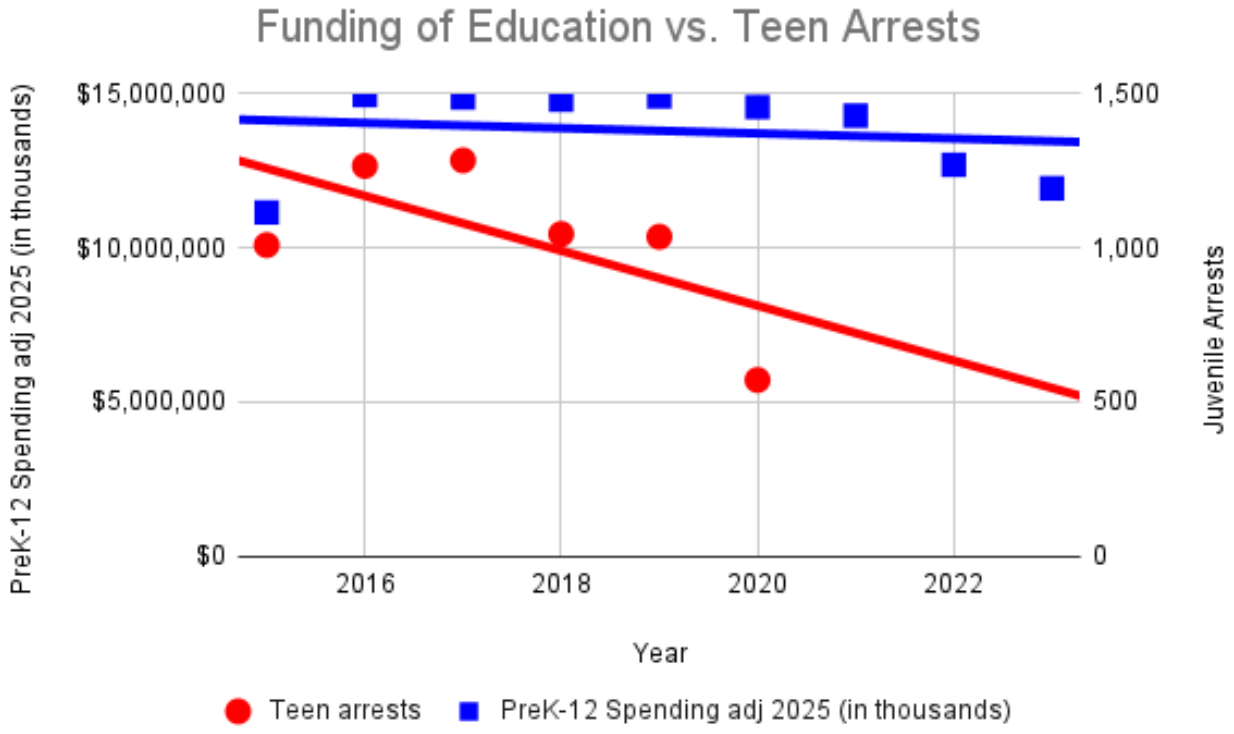
Student	District	Group
Asa H.D.	66A	3
Leo M.	66A	5
Misk S.	66A	8
Aeris H.	66A	11
Brogan B.G.	66A	12
Talulah K.	66A	14
Miles H.	66A	16
Jacob A.	66A	18
Ian N.	66B	1
Ehna S.	66B	2
William S.	66B	3
Frances H	66B	4
Lily K.	66B	7
Piper W.	66B	10
Sophia S.H.	66B	14
Alex M.	66B	15
Vaughn N.	66B	16
Kola O.	67A	1
Abby H.	67A	2
Day L.	67A	2
Abby S.	67A	8
Leo C.	67A	12
Touly V.	67A	15
Lajlim K.	67A	18
Lauren H.	67B	2
Azriella B.	67B	4
Lukas C.	67B	5
Caleb M.	67B	6
Amalena X.	67B	10
Josey P.	67B	14
Padraig T.	67B	17

Group 1

Funding of Education vs. Teen Arrests

Ian N. (66B), Edison K. (64B), and Kola O. (67A)

Emitt Long grew up choked, burned, and beaten. He suffered from depression and was harming himself as early as age 6. He began acting out as he grew into a teenager. He committed felony crimes that put him into the Minnesota juvenile system. His crimes were so serious that at age 14 he was sent to the Minnesota Correctional Facility – Red Wing juvenile prison, where He is in rehab. He is also one of the hundreds of kids who have been ordered into solitary confinement in Minnesota's juvenile lockups.



We are studying the teen arrest vs funding of education. We got our information and data from Bls.gov, MN.gov, and OJJD. Our blue line shows funding of teen education and our red line shows teen arrests from 2015-2020. We can say that with funding staying the same and even going down alongside the arrest rate we can guess that there is another driving factor.

Our group believes that continuing to increase funding will allow teen arrest rates to continue going down. This is good because it will allow for students to have increased extracurriculars and increased opportunities. Additionally, we know there are many practices that have an excellent return on investment for the state of Minnesota.

Year	PreK-12 Spending act (in thousands)	PreK-12 Spending adj 2025 (in thousands)	Teen arrests
2015	$8,204,234	$11,151,772	1,009
2016	$11,155,967	$14,958,580	1,266
2017	$11,375,088	$14,880,380	1,284
2018	$11,559,646	$14,815,060	1,045
2019	$11,820,441	$14,917,890	1,036
2020	$11,831,894	$14,570,050	571
2021	$11,767,497	$14,290,710	
2022	$11,237,420	$12,697,240	
2023	$11,236,290	$11,931,150	
Sources	General Funds Spending	bls.gov	OJJDP

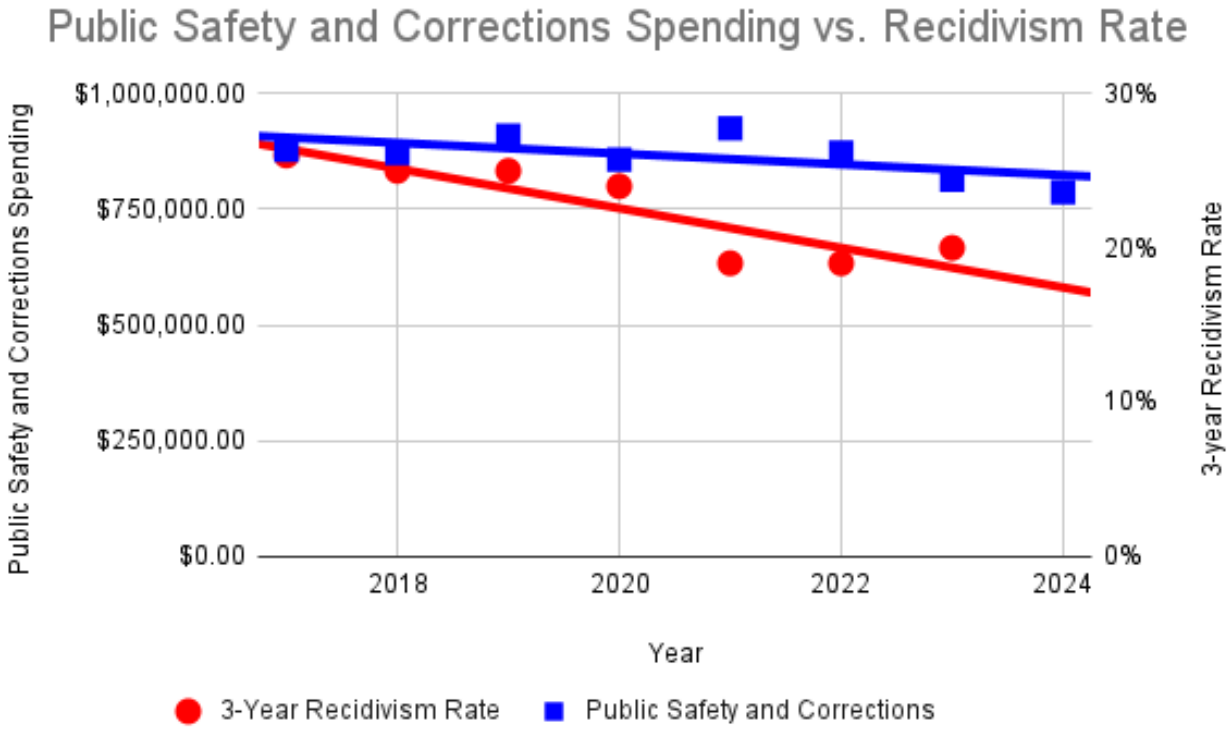
The US has 1,465 juveniles sentenced to life. Minnesota has banned this practice and more funding can continue to divert juveniles from the justice system.

Group 2

Public Safety and Corrections Spending vs. Recidivism Rate

Ehna S. (66B), Abby H. (67A), Lauren H. (67B), and Day L. (67A)

Tino Jones is a former felon. When most people get released from prison they wouldn't know what to do, in some cases they probably won't have something to come back to, then end up back in jail for re-offending. Tino is a different case. When he was released, an organization called Better Future helped him. They gave him job training and housing. Thanks to them, Tino ended up not re-offending. He now is a ReUse Warehouse Store Sales Manager, married, and living in a stable home that he and his wife own. Tino was given a second chance and an opportunity for a better future.



Our group is looking at public safety and corrections spending vs. recidivism. We got the spending data from the Minnesota Department of Education website and our recidivism data from the Minnesota Department of Corrections. Over time, the consistent trend of the spending rates shows that the spending has gone down slightly over the years. The consistent trend in recidivism is the rates dropping over the seven years. As spending stays the same, only decreasing slightly, the recidivism rates are lower.

Re-offending criminals are expensive: Monitors, jailing costs, etc. With programs like Better Future it helps formal offenders get on the right track, contribute to their communities, and have a second chance at bettering themselves despite their actions earlier in their lives. Even though the recidivism rates are going down, we dont believe that refusing the spending in return is a good idea. Instead, we should focus money that could be spared, to implement more groups like Better Future to help support released offenders and offer them the chance at a better life.

Year	Public Safety and Corrections (Act, in thousands)	Public Safety and Corrections (Adj 2025)	3-Year Recidivism Rate (3 year lag, so year 2017 is for people released in 2014)
2017	$672,085	$879,191.21	26%
2018	$680,538	$872,190.28	25%
2019	$720,728	$909,588.67	25%
2020	$696,470	$857,648.04	24%
2021	$762,068	$925,472.33	19%
2022	$772,234	$872,552.35	19%
2023	$766,933	$814,360.98	20%
2024	$764,354	$787,288.31	

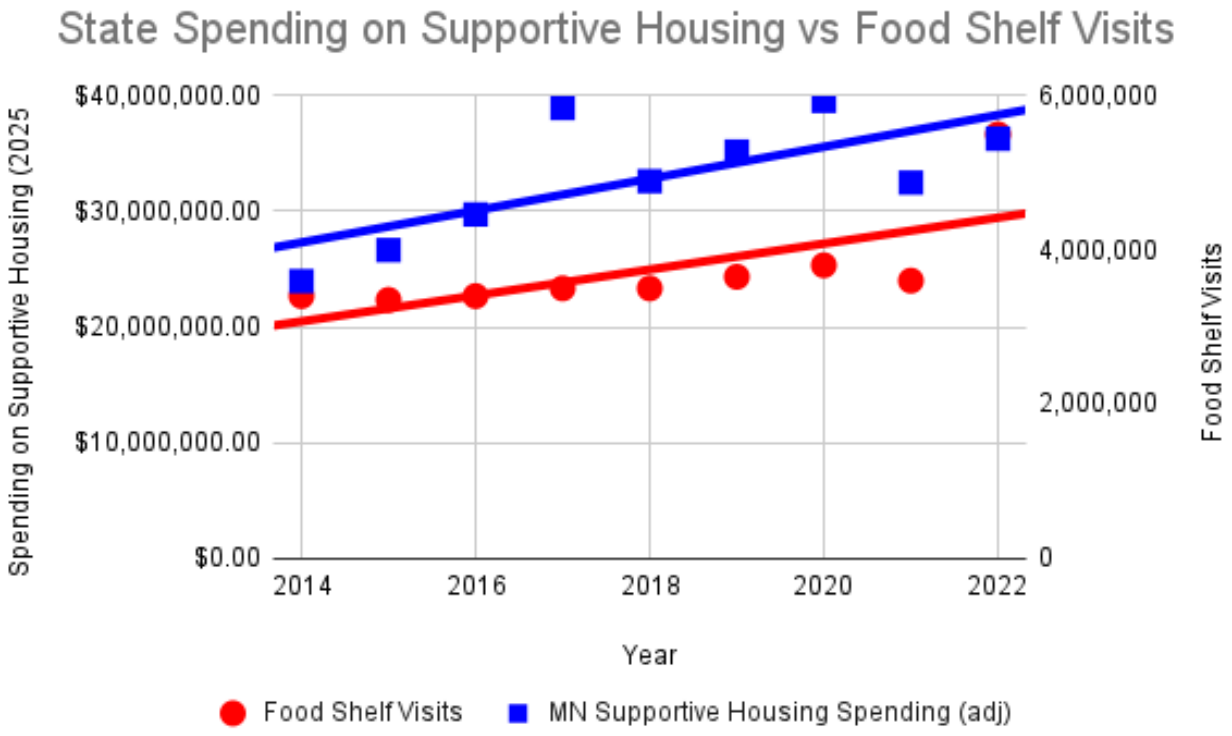
We are suggesting putting more funding towards organizations like Better Future that give job training, housing, and most importantly, the second chance that people deserve.

Group 3

State Spending on Supportive Housing vs. Food Shelf Visits

Henry H. (64B), Will S. (66B), and Asa H.D. (66A)

Paul is a United States veteran. He served four years in the U.S. Airborne Rangers, and during his time, he developed severe PTSD. Because of this, it became difficult for him. to keep jobs, which resulted in complications in his life. Paul lost his home, and was unemployed for two years, with two young daughters in his care. Thanks to the Minnesota Assistance Council, he was able to find housing, and apply for veteran's benefits. He got a job, and was able to earn a steady income. Thanks to Minnesota Supportive Housing, Paul has been able to turn his life around.



We are studying Minnesota food-shelf visits vs. Minnesota state spending on supportive housing. We got our data from a previous expedition that had talked about supportive housing and a website that talks about how to solve hunger in Minnesota. The red line shows the amount of food shelf visits in Minnesota and it shows that it is going up meaning the rate of hunger is going up. The blue line shows that the amount of money that the state spends on supportive housing is going up. Both of our lines show that as spending for supportive housing goes up the amount of people visiting food shelves goes up as well.

In addition to supportive housing we ask possibly to create a fund that will let people under supportive housing to be able to go and buy their own food instead of needing to rely on food shelves. We believe that the result of this would be less money needing to be spent on food shelves.

Year	Supportive Housing Spending, actual	Supportive Housing Spending, adj 2025	Number of persons with Food Insecurity
2014	$ 17,530,000	$ 23,953,792	3,400,000
2015	$ 19,483,000	$ 26,646,225	3,350,000
2016	$ 22,039,000	$ 29,734,179	3,400,000
2017	$ 29,603,000	$ 38,965,082	3,500,000
2018	$ 25,287,000	$ 32,607,892	3,500,000
2019	$ 27,282,000	$ 35,180,845	3,650,000
2020	$ 31,153,000	$ 39,559,395	8,000,000
2021	$ 31,543,000	$ 32,489,442	3,600,000
2022	$ 31,929,000	$ 36,299,430	5,500,000

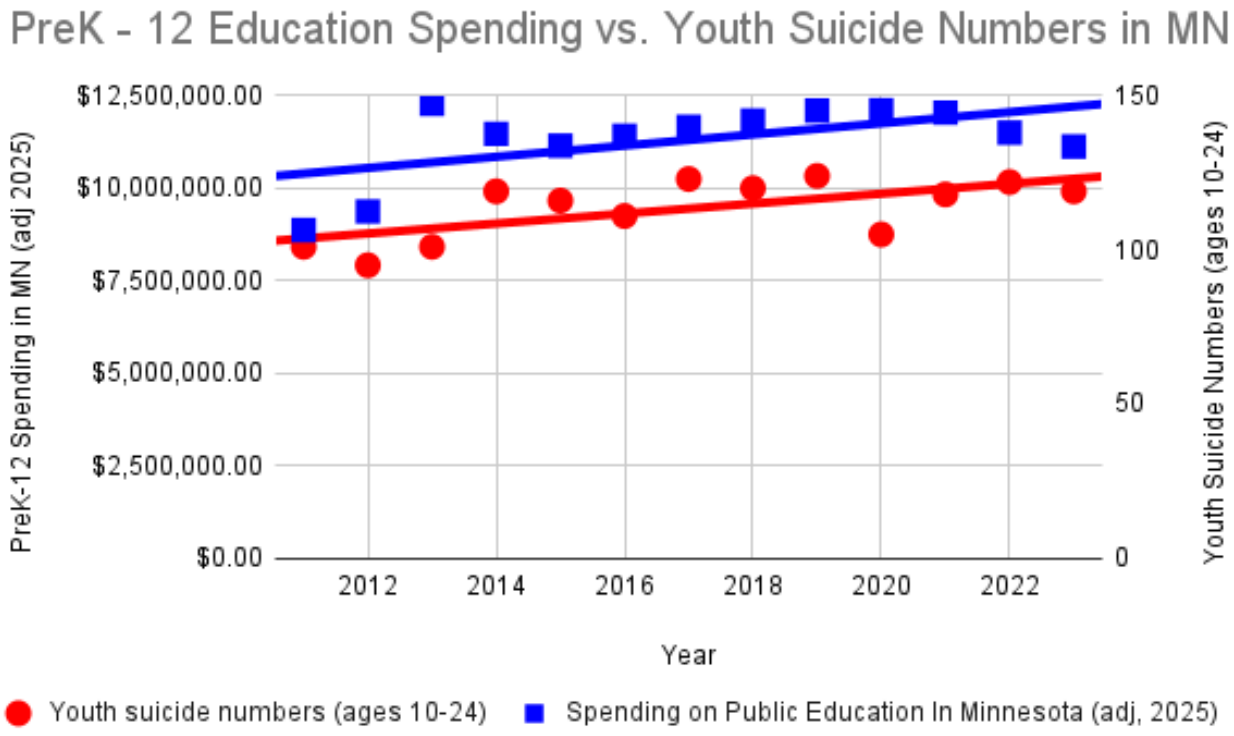
We need to do something to help people who live with food insecurity. Start food drives, donate to a charity. Anything helps.

Group 4

PreK-12 Education Spending vs. Youth Suicide Numbers in MN

Azriella B. (67B), Frances H. (66B), Hannah L. (64A), and Sam O. (65B)

In 2020, a teen named Sam Casperson took his life on January 2nd, after multiple of his friends deaths; also suicides. There had been a domino effect of suicides lately and sadly, Sam fell victim to this ripple. He was one of six high schoolers in the Blaine area to die by suicide over the late summer. His parents had said on the news that this could have been preventable if there was a mental health grief group in his school. The local police chief had recorded and posted a video about mental health and suicide signs in hopes to prevent any further suicide attempts.



We are researching Money Spent on Public Education in Minnesota vs. Youth Suicide Numbers in Minnesota and how they effect each other. Our group got the youth suicide rates from the years 2011-2023 from Wonder.cdc.gov; we got our Money Spent on Public Education in Minnesota data from General Fund Spending by Major Area. In the first two sets of data (black and blue) it shows that the money spent on Minnesota schools funding has gone up over the years, while our third line (red) shows how the youth suicides over the years are mostly random which is proven by the varied numbers every year, but from the beginning to the end the suicide rates go up. The lines together show that when funding towards public schools in Minnesota increases, the number of suicides in Minnesota also appears to increase.

It is most likely that the increase of number of suicides in Minnesota can mostly be atributed to an increasing population. We think that if Minnesota puplic schools got more funding towards schools counselors and mental health recognition there would be less youth suicide rates throughout Minnesota because counselors can help address problems instead of pushing them away. We believe that even though it would be expensive to fund this plan, a person's life and happiness is worth any cost. If we preform these steps, youth might feel more accepted and happier which would hopefully lead to less youth suicide rates in Minnesota.

Years	Money Spent on Public Education In Minnesota (in thousands act.)	Money Spent on Public Education In Minnesota (in thousands) Adjusted	Youth Suicide Numbers In Minnesota (ages 10-24)
2011	$6,148,293	8,868,893.74	101
2012	$6,687,479	9,372,501.89	95
2013	$8,905,875	12,285,644.51	101
2014	$8,446,137	11,470,326.04	119
2015	$8,204,234	11,151,772.17	116
2016	$8,516,938	11,420,014.74	111
2017	$8,901,333	11,664,321.36	123
2018	$9,233,048	11,833,247.63	120
2019	$9,587,811	12,100,215.76	124
2020	$9,835,739	12,111,949.11	105
2021	$9,919,135	12,046,018.21	118
2022	$10,180,844	11,503,400	122
2023	$10,479,704	11,127,780	119
Sources	General Fund Spending by Major Area.	bls.gov	Wonder.cdc.gov

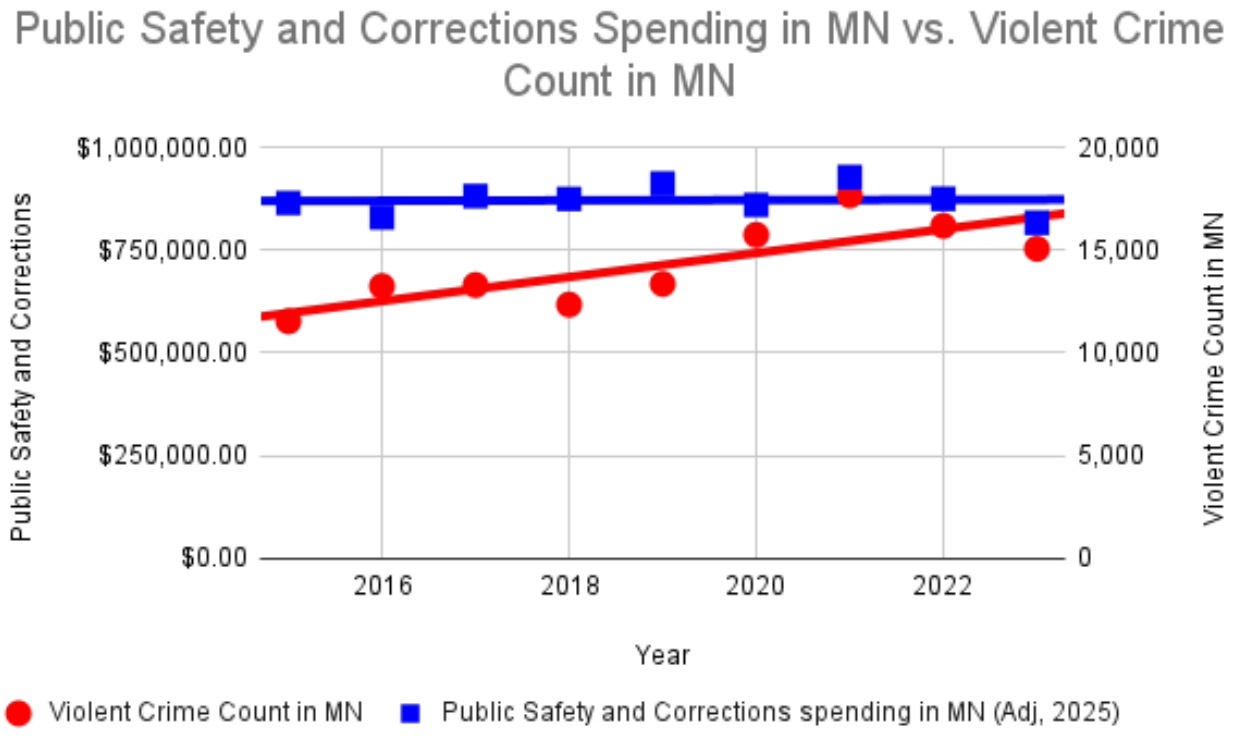
If more money was put toward mental health resources in Minnesota schools, better mental health support could be provided to students.

Group 5

Public Safety and Corrections Spending in MN vs. Violent Crime Count

Lukas C. (67B), Ian C. (65B), Leo M. (66A), and Zander S. (64B)

At around 11:00 am on September 28 1953 one of the teachers at the French Institute of Notre Dame De Sion, a school for small children in Kansas City, opened the door to find a lady claiming to be the aunt of Bobby Greenlease. Later at around 11:30 am, the teacher called Mrs Greenlease about Bobby's aunt picking him up. The Mrs Greenlease immediately called her husband, who rushed home after hearing the story, called the police chief who then notified the FBI. On September 28 1953 at around 6:00 am the Greenlease family received a ransom letter demanding $600,000 in $20 and $10 dollar bills be placed in a duffel bag. On September 29 1953 the Greenlease received another letter that contained the Jerusalem medal worn by Bobby Greenlease and similar demands for money.



Overall the Greenlease family received 6 letters and 15 telephone calls. The last communication happened in October 5 1953 saying that the kidnappers had got the money and Bobby Greenlease was going to be returned in the next 24 hours. Unknown to the family, the kidnappers, Carl Hall and Bonnie Heady, had killed Bobby Greenlease soon after his abduction. Bobby Greenlease was a six-year-old boy who was kidnapped and killed.

We are studying police funding vs violent crime count. We got our data from bls.gov, and FBI Crime Data explorer. The blue line represents the Public Safety and Corrections Spending in MN being mostly flat, while the red line means Violent Crime count and has been rising, it shows that unless Police Funding is increased, Violent Crimes will increase.

I believe that we need to somehow increase the police force because as the population grows so does the amount of crime. However I believe that the police force may not be growing. To change this we could add more benefits to being a police officer.

Year	Public safety and corrections spending in MN (actual)	Public safety and corrections spending in MN (Adj, 2025)	Violent Crime Count
2015	$634,412	$866,167.68	11,554
2016	$616,920	$830,877.05	13,268
2017	$672,085	$883,096.31	13,320
2018	$680,538	$876,064.28	12,365
2019	$720,728	$913,628.80	13,377
2020	$696,470	$861,457.45	15,769
2021	$762,068	$929,583.00	17,697
2022	$772,234	$876,427.96	16,213
2023	$766,933	$817,978.12	15,092
Source	General Fund Spending by Major Area	bls.gov	FBI Crime Data Explorer

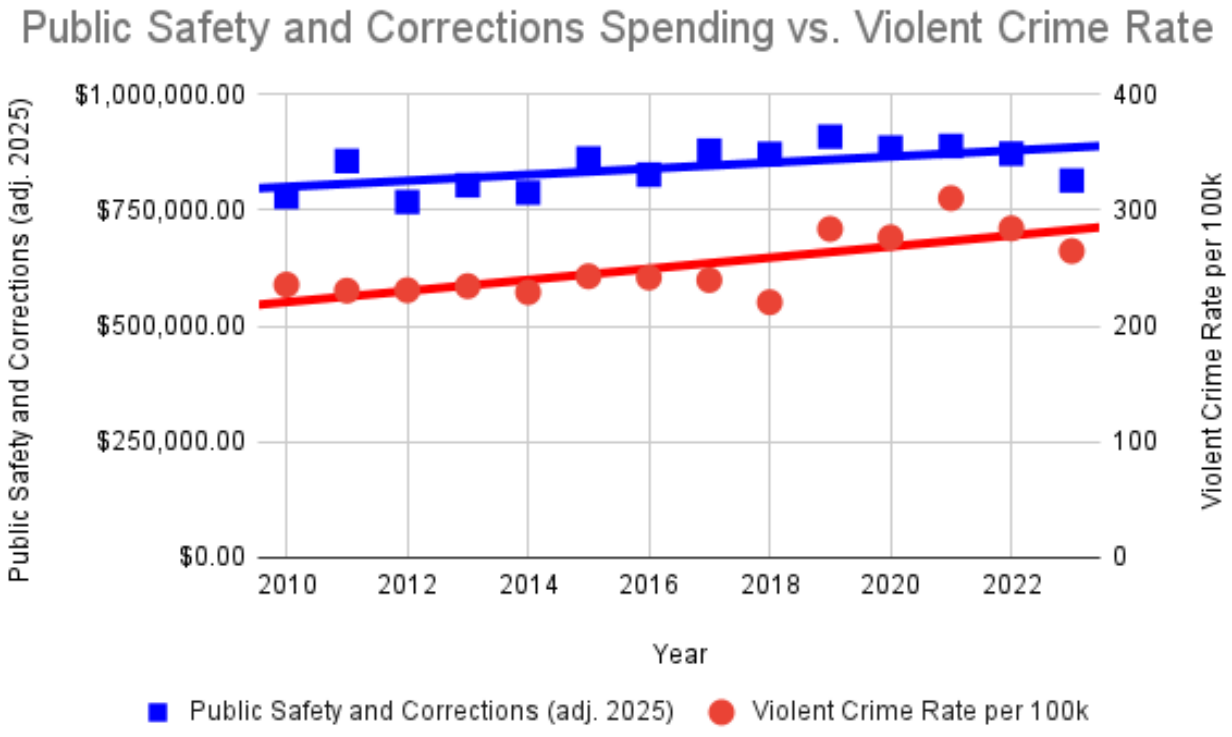
Increasing support for police departments to address the increasing number of violent crimes, as they are increasing faster than state spending on Public Safety and Corrections.

Group 6

Public Safety and Corrections Spending vs. Violent Crime Rate

Caleb M. (67B), Henry B. (64B), Oskar HM. (64B), and Marcus R. (64A)

Daijah Hammonds was shot while helping chaperone a birthday party for a friend's younger sister that turned into a raging party in South Minneapolis. At 2 a.m., she was trying to get people to leave and then bullets pierced through the wall, hitting her and a man next to her. She described, "It just came through the windows. I was the first one hit. I felt a zing, like an electric feeling and then I remembered my body felt like it deflated. Then we were on the floor." When she was on the floor, she saw a man next to her take his final breaths. She said that this was the worst part of her life and still struggles to sleep to this day. To prevent this from happening we should spend more money on public safety to train police officers to keep places safe. This would help prevent tragedies like the one that happened to Daijah Hammonds.



We are studying Public Safety and Corrections spending vs. Crime Rate in Minnesota. We obtained this data from past Senate reports, public government documents showing funding, and official government websites. Our first data set shows that public safety and corrections spending has been gradually increasing. In addition, our second data set indicates that the violent crime rate per 100,000 people has also been slowly rising. This suggests that as the crime rate increases, government spending on public safety and corrections tends to rise.

What we are asking is for you to allocate more of the budget to Public Safety and Corrections so that officers can receive the training they need to prevent violence and ensure public safety. By investing more money in proven methods to lower crime rates—such as Police-Initiated Diversion for Youth, which keeps youth out of the criminal justice system and costs significantly less than other methods—this increase in spending is a necessary step to reduce crime in Minnesota and keep the state safe.

Year	Public Safety and Corrections, thousands	Public Safety and Corrections, thousands (inflation)	Violent Crime Rate per 100,000 people
2010	531,507	779,208	235.66
2011	593,990	856,828	230.45
2012	548,095	768,155	230.85
2013	582,952	804,181	234.41
2014	580,405	788,222	229.15
2015	634,412	862,337	242.94
2016	616,920	827,202	241.90
2017	672,085	879,191	239.67
2018	680,538	872,190	220.44
2019	720,728	909,588	238.9
2020	719,113	885,531	276.6
2021	732,242	889,250	310.5
2022	772,201	872,515	284.4
2023	767,183	814,626	264.8
Source	MN General Fund Balance Analysis	Inflation Calculator	FBI Crime Data Explorer

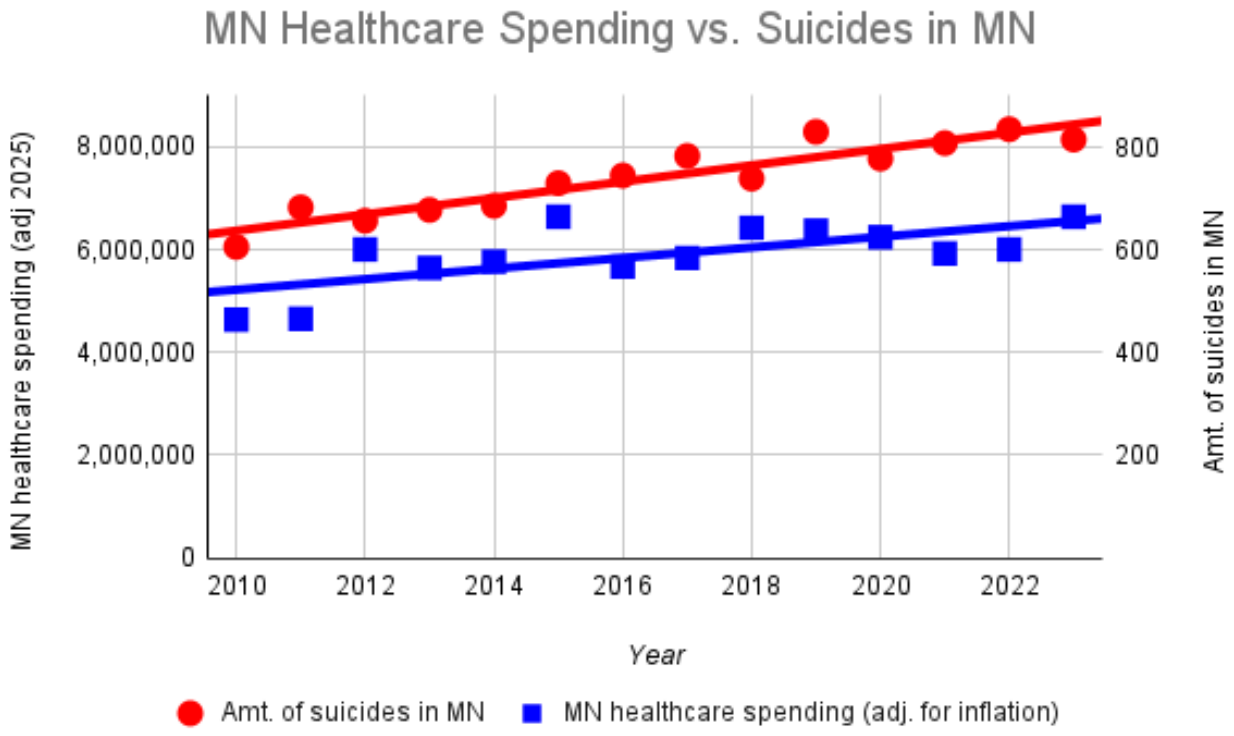
We need to invest more in Public Safety and Corrections to help keep our state safe so we can live in peace.

Group 7

Minnesota Healthcare Spending vs. Minnesota Suicide Rate

Cooper S. (64A), Luisa S. (64A), Luci H. (65B), and Lily K. (66B)

14-year-old Haylee Fentress had recently moved to Minnesota and was starting at a new school. She was severely bullied and had made very few friends. Haylee's best friend, Paige Moravetz, went to the same school as her, and they did everything together. Paige and Haylee both became depressed and eventually committed suicide together at a slumber party. Haylee's aunt said there were some indications in their suicide note that they had been planning it for some time. These two suicides could've been prevented just like the suicides of hundreds of kids and adults every year.



We are studying the relationship between government spending on healthcare and suicide rates in Minnesota. We researched data on Minnesota suicide rates, from CDC.gov and found that recently, both health care spending and suicide rates have been rising, but the healthcare spending doesn't seem to be affecting the suicide rates. This is especially worrying because of the increasing suicide rates. Last year, Minnesota had over a hundred more suicides than ten years ago.

Not enough of the healthcare spending is going to suicide prevention. Instead of just giving money, the money needs to be allocated to places like the suicide helpline, therapists, and other mental health officials.The healthcare money isn't reaching enough people or being used effectively for suicide prevention.

Year	State Funds spent on Healthcare	State Funds Spent on Healthcare (adj. For inflation, 2025)	Amt. of Suicides
2010	$3,166,111	$4,641,634	606
2011	$3,227,869	$4,656,191	683
2012	$4,288,049	$6,009,701	657
2013	$4,093,265	$5,646,654	678
2014	$4,248,812	$5,770,124	686
2015	$4,889,416	$6,646,038	730
2016	$4,229,041	$5,670,549	745
2017	$4,464,982	$5,840,888	783
2018	$5,093,997	$6,428,835	739
2019	$5,051,639	$6,375,378	830
2020	$5,072,579	$6,246,481	778
2021	$4,880,869	$5,929,435	808
2022	$5,317,469	$6,008,243	835
2023	$6,228,973	$6,643,557	815
Source	General Fund Spending by Major Category	bls.gov	CDC.gov

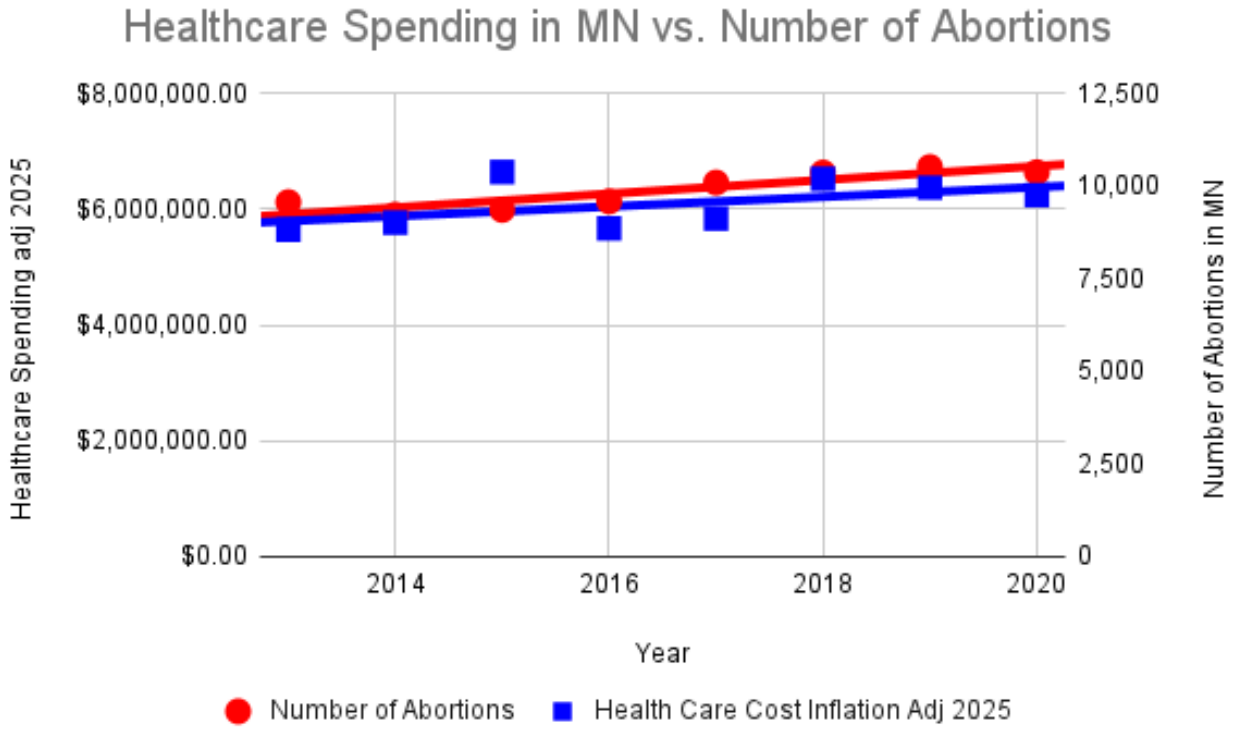
Mental health is just as important as physical health, which is why we demand higher healthcare spending to help those struggling with mental health.

Group 8

Healthcare Spending in MN vs. Number of Abortions

Isabella C. (64B) Caroline A.(65A), Abby S (67A), and Misk S.(66A)

It has been approximately 25 years since the Supreme Court of Minnesota's 1997 ruling of Women of the State of Minnesota V. Gomez, set up that the state constitution protects the right to abortion. This significant case, which is also known as Doe V. Gomez, had an anonymous plaintiff along with six others who have represented Minnesota women. You may be wondering who Jane Doe is. Jane Doe was a victim of rape, who needed an abortion in Minnesota, but she unfortunately couldn't afford it. Her health insurance and medical insurance couldn't cover the procedure.



We are studying the number of abortions vs. healthcare spending and inflation throughout 2013 - 2020. We found this information through credible websites and documents. Our first column (black) shows that Minnesota healthcare spending has gone up. Our second column (red) shows that Minnesota healthcare spending has inflated. And the third column (blue) shows that the number of abortions has gone up over the years. All of the data together represents that as the number of abortions go up in the state, so does the price of healthcare.

We are asking that policy makers lower the price of abortion. The result we are expecting from this is less people being forced to have a baby because they couldn't afford to get an abortion. The opportunity for a woman to have an abortion is not a dollar and cents situation, they need to be able to choose how they use their body and not let the economy take over their lives. Money isn't the question, it's about women's health, their bodies, and lives. Their ask to lower the price of abortion is crucial because it makes abortion more accessible to people who can't afford it. If people who can't afford it are unable to get the help they need, it could lead to serious health issues or forcing them to give birth when they are not ready. Lowering the price allows everyone the opportunity to have an abortion despite their wealth so they can make a decision for their health.

Years	Healthcare Cost (Actual, thousands)	Healthcare Cost Inflation Adj 2025	Number of Abortions
2013	$4,093,265	$5,646,654.45	9,570
2014	$4,248,812	$5,770,124.13	9,230
2015	$4,889,416	$6,646,038.29	9,360
2016	$4,229,041	$5,670,548.56	9,590
2017	$4,464,982	$5,840,887.57	10,100
2018	$5,093,997	$6,528,562.18	10,370
2019	$5,051,639	$6,375,378.26	10,520
2020	$5,072,579	$6,246,482.14	10,380
Sources	MN Healthcare Spending	bls.gov	Guttmacher Data Center

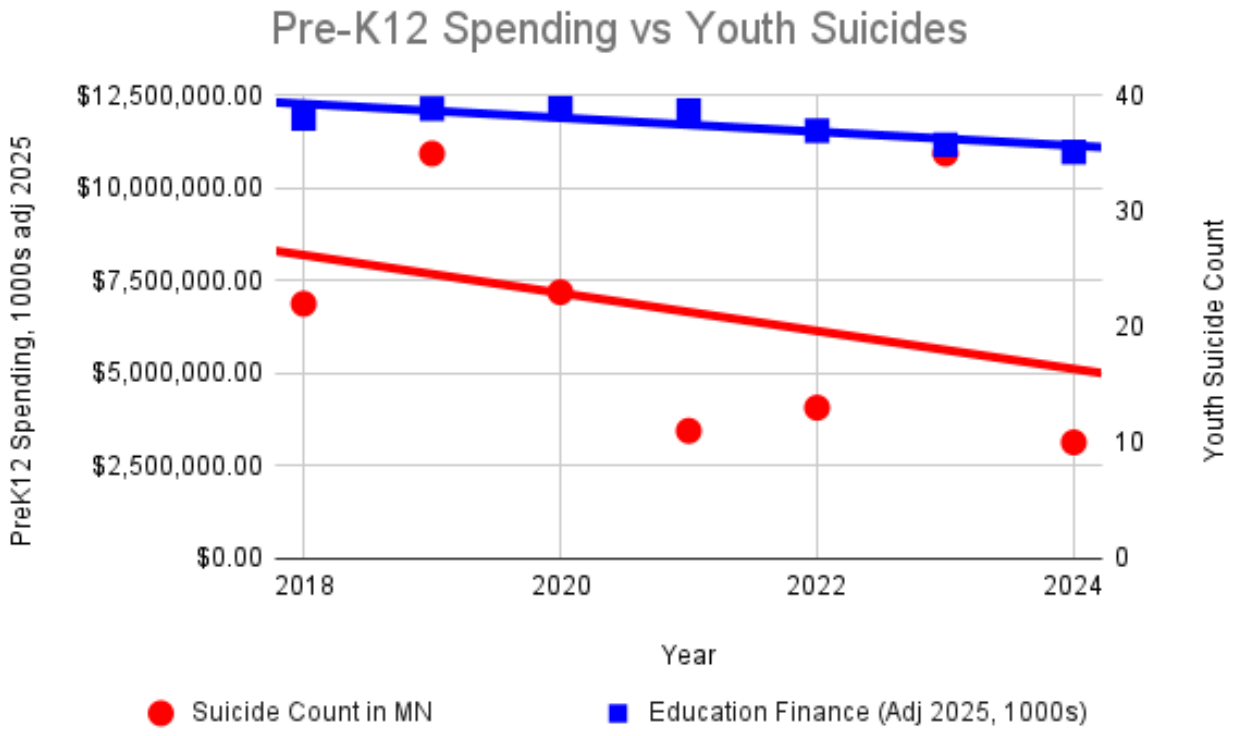
Lowering the price of abortion allows everyone the opportunity to get the healthcare they need to make their own decisions for their health.

Group 9

PreK-12 Education Spending vs. Suicide Counts for Teens in MN

Ash B. (64A) and Jasper B. (65B)

Thousands of children suffer from suicidal thoughts every day but some are so extreme that kids act out on it. This story is about a 12 year old transgender teenager who would like to stay anonymous. This person lost their friends and was made fun of for their gender and sexual orientation. On March 19, 2024, he went to the emergency room after attempting suicide. He missed 3 days of school and when he came back, no one knew what he was going through. This year they detransitioned and finally found the right friends and stopped getting bullied, but that doesn't justify the pain they went through. No kid should ever be put down by others for being themself or standing out. This child was lucky enough to have any people who cared and helped them after this, but hundreds of people in similar situations don't, and many of those people attempt and many succeed in taking their life because no one cared to check on them.



We are studying the correlation between the suicide count for teens in Minnesota and the PreK-12 education funding. Our group got the suicide count from 2018-2024 from CDC and the PreK-12 education funding from General Fund Spending by Major Area. Our first data set is the teen suicide count in Minnesota 2018-2024 on the red line, it seems to have gone down across the years. Our second data set is Education Finance (adjusted for inflation) in thousands 2018-2024 on the blue line, which has gone down slightly over time. This shows that when education funding decreases, the teen suicide count will decrease as well.

We need more funding for school therapy and social workers. Students struggle everyday to make friends and socialize at school due to feeling left out and not getting the support they need. Suicide rates are lower than ever right now, but even so the rates aren't at 0 like they should be.

Year	Education Finance (Actual, 1000s)	Education Finance (Adj 2025, 1000s)	Suicide Count in MN Ages 10-19
2018	$9,233,048	$11,885,807.4	22
2019	$9,587,811	$12,153,961,31	35
2020	$9,835,739	$12,165,736.74	23
2021	$9,919,135	$12,099,523.03	11
2022	$10,180,844	$11,554,498.2	13
2023	$10,479,704	$11,177,206.6	35
2024	$10,614,662	$10,981,715	10
Source	General Fund Spending by Major Area	bls.gov	CDC

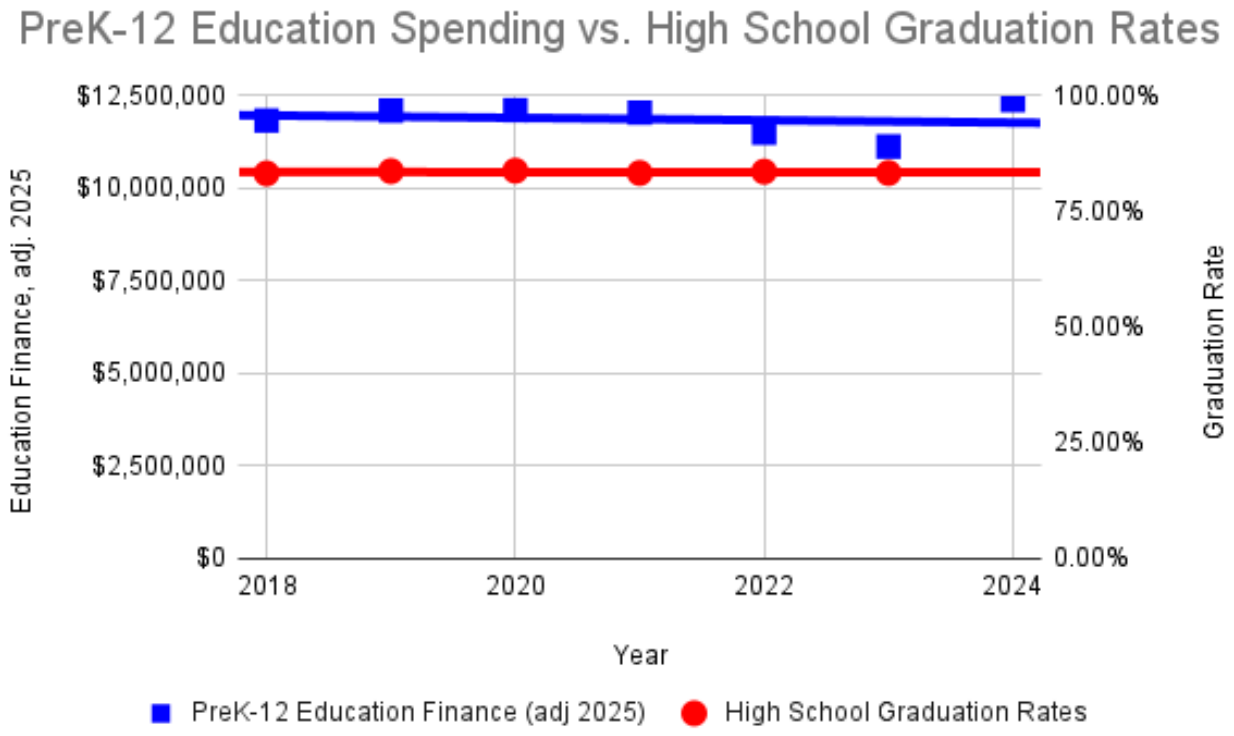
Despite suicide rates going down, getting more funding for school mental health care will not only make youth suicide rates go down but also students will feel safe going to school.

Group 10

PreK-12 Education Spending vs. High School Graduation Rates

Amalena X. (67B), Chloe A. (65A), Piper W. (66B), and Savannah Y. (47B)

Wyatt Deno beat very slim odds. When he was only seven years old, he was diagnosed with a rare type of brain tumor and was told he had less than six months left to live. After therapy and lots of treatments, Deno miraculously survived. Now, at 18, he'll be graduating from Kasson-Mantorville High School more than a decade after beating cancer. His friends and family say that he is a powerhouse of positivity. "I just like sharing my story and giving people positive thoughts," he said. "I like being a positive person. It's just who I am."



We are studying the correlation between high school graduation rates vs. prek-12 education spending. We got our education data from General Fund Spending by Major Area and our graduation rate data from Minnesota Compass. Our first line (blue) shows that education funding has decreased throughout the years. Our second line (red) shows that high school graduation rates have mostly stayed the same throughout the years. These lines together show that when education funding decreases, the high school education rates stay the same.

We ask the policymakers to increase funding for schools. Research shows that while funding has decreased, high school graduation rates have remained the same. This means that current funding may maintain graduation rates, but increasing funding could improve educational resources and expand support for students. Increasing funding is necessary because it impacts the quality of education that students receive. A better education system means higher graduation rates.

Year	PreK-12 Education Finance (actual)	PreK-12 Education Finance (adjusted 2025)	High School Graduation Rates
2018	$9,233,048	$11,833,247	83.2%
2019	$9,587,811	$12,100,215	83.7%
2020	$9,835,739	$12,111,939	83.8%
2021	$9,919,135	$12,046,018	83.3%
2022	$10,180,844	$11,503,403	83.6%
2023	$10,479,704	$11,127,780	83.3%
2024	$11,969,194	$12,383,086	
Sources	General Fund Spending by Major Area	BLS Inflation Calculator	MNCompass.org

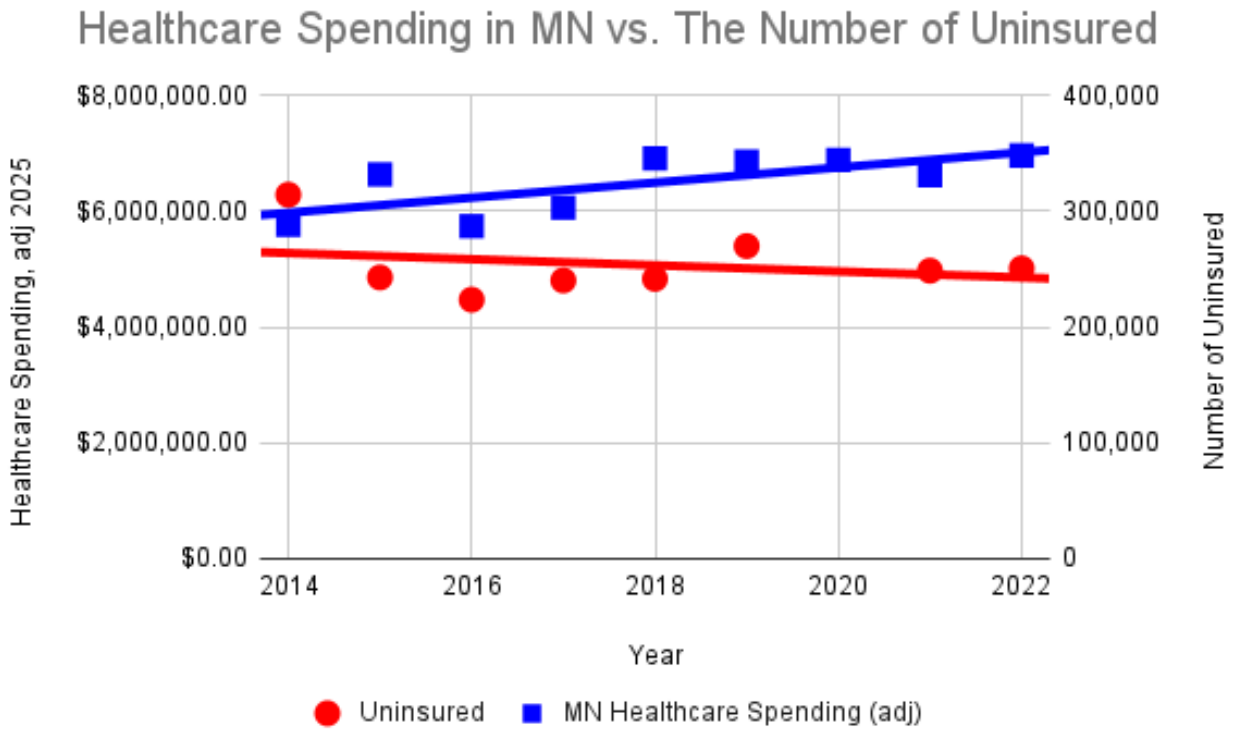
We must increase school funding for students so they can graduate successfully and provide support to people with academic or personal challenges.

Group 11

Healthcare Spending in MN vs. The Number of Uninsured

Aeris H. (66A), Pangaea W. (65B), Cora H. (65B), and Si P. (65B)

Kate is a woman living in Minneapolis who has relied on healthcare through her husband's company for years. In 2020, her husband was laid off like many people at the time. They enrolled in UCare, but could not afford as good of insurance as they previously had. She's no longer able to see her neurologist, she can't get the EpiPens she needs for her severe allergies, and she has to struggle through her need for ankle surgery because she can no longer afford it. Stories like these are unfortunately not uncommon, especially after the pandemic in 2020. Many people aren't able to afford adequate healthcare. Access to healthcare saves lives, and everyone has the fundamental right to sufficient insurance.



We are studying the correlation between healthcare spending in MN vs. the number of uninsured individuals. We found the information from MN Compass, General Fund Spending by Major Area, and BLS websites. The blue line shows the gradual increase of spending on healthcare. The red line shows the gradual decrease of uninsured individuals. This shows us that spending more money on healthcare leads to less people uninsured.

Minnesota has fair healthcare, but when the state spends more on healthcare, more people are unable to get health insurance. This is important because healthcare is crucial for people's daily lives. Having access to healthcare is a fundamental right that takes away the financial burden of sickness, and improves overall quality of life.

Year	MN Health Spending (act)	MN Health Spending (adj)	Uninsured
2014	4,248,812	5,770,124	314,394
2015	4,889,416	6,640,100	242,798
2016	4,229,041	5,743,274	223,525
2017	4,464,982	6,063,695	240,191
2018	5,093,997	6,917,891	241,569
2019	5,051,639	6,860,408	269,954
2020	5,072,579	6,888,845	
2021	4,880,869	6,628,492	248,620
2022	5,130,443	6,967,428	250,647
Sources	MN General Fund Spending by Major Area	bls.gov	MN Compass

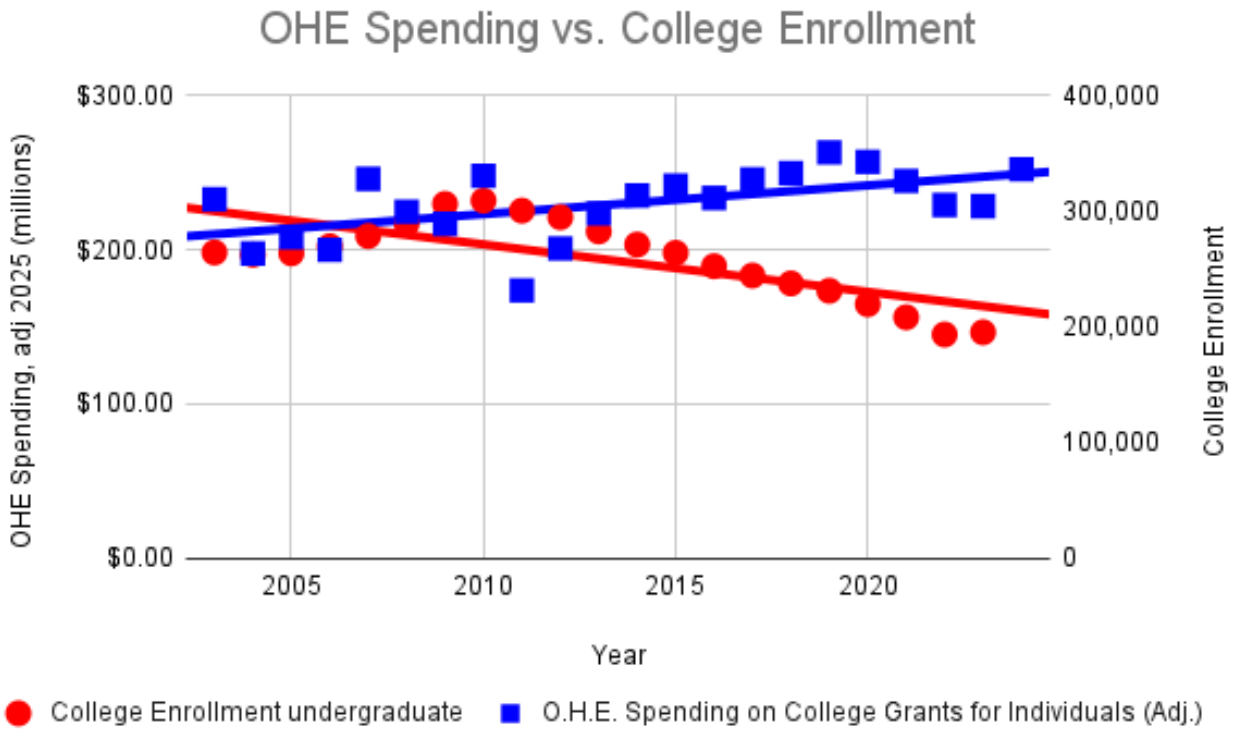
As MN spends on healthcare, insurance increases. We believe that healthcare is a fundamental right so the number of uninsured should be 0.

Group 12

OHE Spending on College Grants for Individual Undergraduates vs. Undergraduate Enrollment

Benjamin A. (64A), Brogan B.G. (66A), Leo C. (67A), and Sam C. (64A)

Jean Prokott, a teacher at Century High School in Rochester, Minnesota, is in severe student debt due to many factors including not being able to attain grants; making peace with her student debt she said: “I just sort of accepted that I will give the government $500 a month until I die, I don't ever see how I would catch up on these loans.” Jean makes about $70,000 annually, excluding taxes. While, her student debt is pushing $96,000, with interest.



Our topic is the Office of Higher Education spending on college grants for individual undergraduates vs. college transfers and enrollments. We found the information through the Office of Higher Education website and education data initiative. Our first line (red) shows college transfers and enrollments going down. Our second line (blue) shows the amount spent by the Office of Higher Education (adjusted for inflation) going up. These lines when put together show that when funding increases college transfers and enrollments goes down.

Year	O.H.E. Spending on College Grants for Individuals	O.H.E. Spending on College Grants for Individuals (Adj.)	College Enrollments
2003	$133.59	$232.80	264,380
2004	$115.32	$197.62	262,469
2005	$124.44	$208.21	263,656
2006	$124.29	$199.99	269,841
2007	$156.10	$246.07	278,630
2008	$148.67	$224.74	289,336
2009	$143.52	$216.89	306,422
2010	$168.50	$248.12	309,319
2011	$119.89	$173.71	300,606
2012	$142.73	$200.92	294,924
2013	$161.42	$223.67	282,674
2014	$172.51	$235.32	271,255
2015	$177.03	$241.70	264,083
2016	$173.49	$233.66	252,534
2017	$187.08	$245.82	244,449
2018	$194.02	$249.76	237,616
2019	$207.70	$263.29	231,246
2020	$207.90	$257.15	219,643
2021	$200.60	$244.70	208,295
2022	$201.89	$229.13	193,378
2023	$214.14	$228.39	195,295
2024	$243.93	$252.37	264,380
Source	OHE.state.mn.us	BLS.gov inflation Calc.	OHE.state.mn.us

Enrollments are going down and more people are graduating straight into a job; not continuing their education and ending up with tens of thousands in student debt. Meanwhile, you are spending more. To reiterate, people are graduating more and, to add, without any help from you and possibly with a lower level of education than they had hoped for. This request is necessary because unless the people are educated, we cannot hope to progress in scientific, economic, and industrial advances.

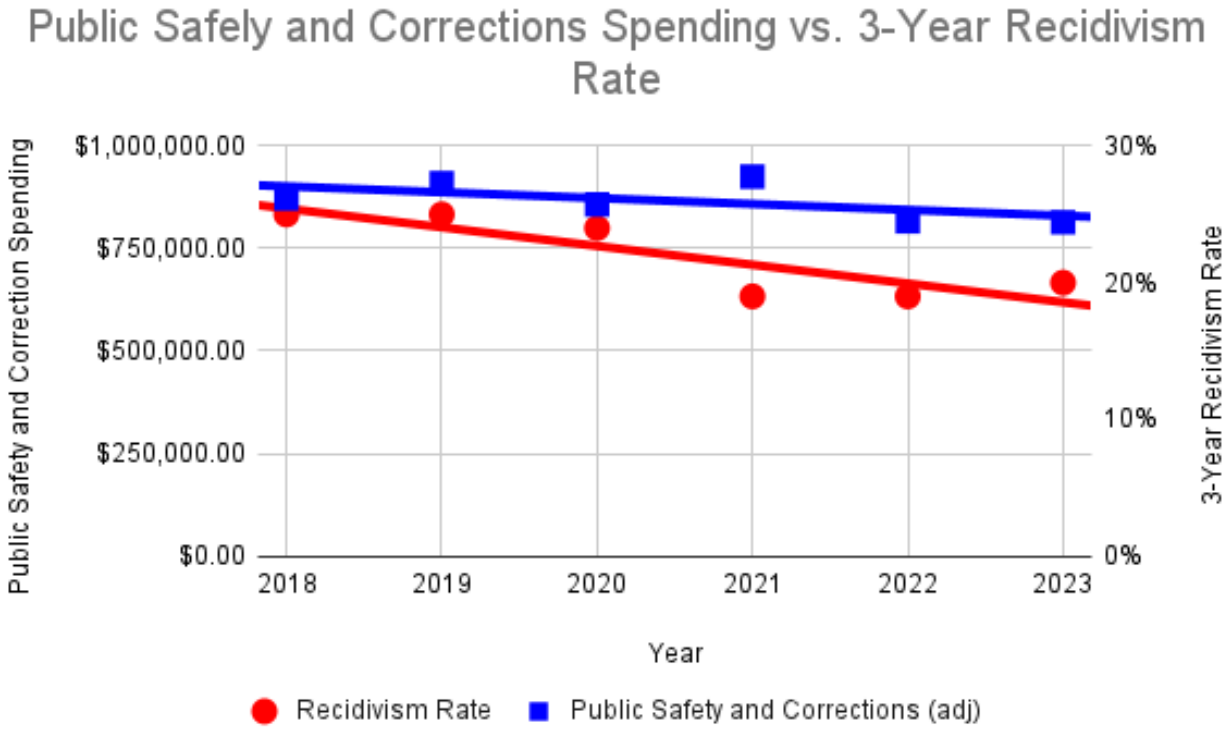
Grant spending should be increased because the average student debt per person is $34,000, making Minnesota 5th for student debt in America.

Group 13

Public Safety and Corrections Spending vs. Recidivism Rate

Charlie C. (64A), Oskar G.D. (64B), Luca L. (65B), and Dominic S. (64B)

We are looking into the relationship between the spending on public safety and corrections and the 3 year recidivism rate, we have a story about it. Robby was a child in an abusive household and left home when he was a young kid. He was taken by juvenile detention at the age of 14 for the first time and for the next 40 years he went in and out of prison. Since he was 14, his longest time out of prison was 2 and a half years. At 53 when he was released for the last time he asked the people there to let him back in because it was the only thing he knew. If we had worked on corrections all of this could have been prevented instead of just putting him back in.



We are studying the cost of public safety and corrections vs. 3-year recidivism rate. We got most of our information from government websites. One of the data sets we studied was public safety and corrections spending, we observed it went down over time. The other data set that we studied was recidivism rate, we noticed that this also went down, similar to public safety and corrections. In conclusion, both graphs went down over the course of three years.

In conclusion, the less we spend on public safety and corrections, the higher the chance of criminals reoffending. Our ask is to put more focus and money into public safety and corrections in order to keep people from committing crimes. We hope that from this, crime rates will go down and criminals will reoffend less. Cognitive Behavioural therapy is a type of therapy for high risk individuals, which is proven to reduce recidivism. The ROI for this is $4.17 per dollar, which makes profit and also greatly effects reducing the recidivism rate.

Year	Public Safety and Corrections Spending (actual)	Public Safety and Corrections Spending (adj 2025 dollars)	Recidivism Rate
2018	$680,538	$872,190	25%
2019	$720,728	$909,589	25%
2020	$696,470	$857,648	24%
2021	$762,068	$925,472	19%
2022	$722,234	$816,057	19%
2023	$766,933	$814,361	20%
Source	MN Gov General Funding Major Area	bls.gov	MN Department of Corrections

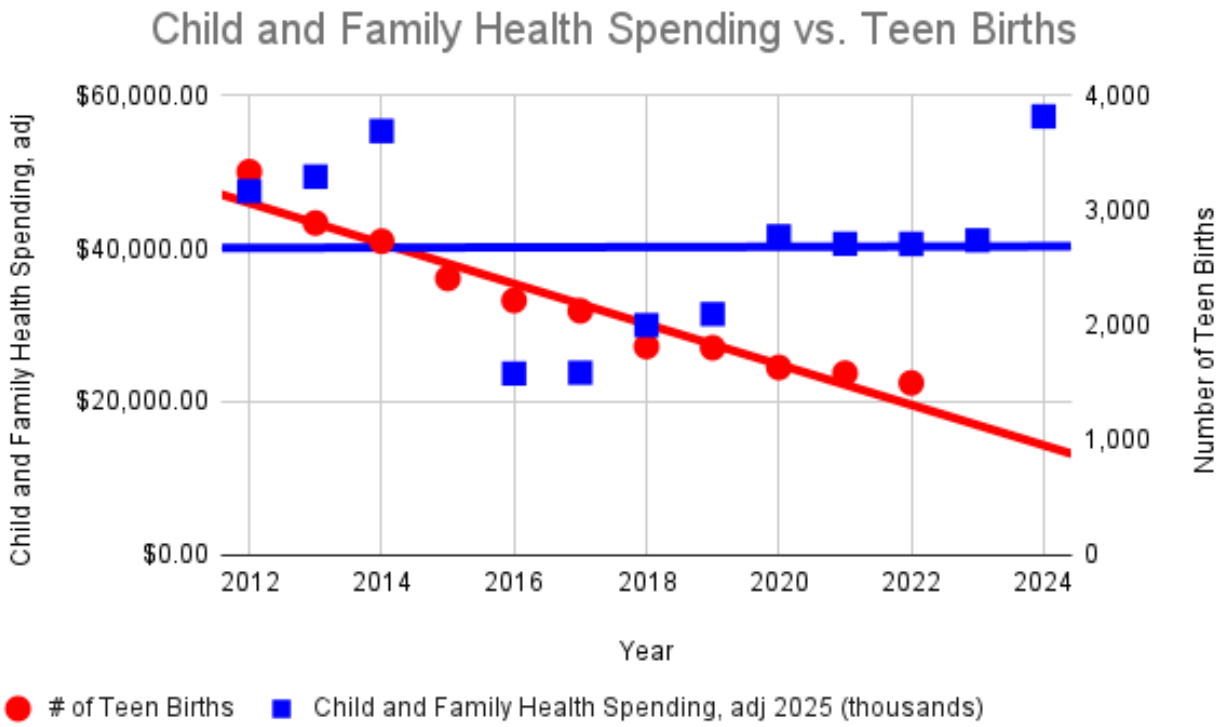
There have been many different occasions where recidivism has come into play, but it can be reduced by spending more on corrections.

Group 14

Child and Family Health Spending vs. Teen Births in Minnesota

Clare E. (64B), Josey P. (67B), Sophia S.H. (66B),
and Talulah K. (64A and 66A)

Tessily Gregory got pregnant at 15. She was working hard to get a good education and when she found out she was pregnant she became scared for her future. Tessily knew she needed support so she told her family despite being unsure of how they would react. They were fully supportive and were able to help her continue high school. Tessily wanted to go to college so she began researching programs that supported her and her child. In late April, her baby was born, and Tessily was now dividing her time between going to school and visiting her baby in the NICU. She struggled to get day care for her baby so she had to start attending school online instead of in person. She found a great college to pursue a degree in early childhood education. She chose Misericordia University because of it's amazing Women With Children Program that would support her in getting a higher education and taking care of her family.



We are studying the relationship between state spending on child and family health vs. teen births in minnesota. We got our teen birth data from the Star Tribune, and we got our government spending data from the BLS and the Minnesota Management and Budget. We noticed that the teen birth rate in Minnesota has gone down over time and the spending for Sexual and Reproductive health services has been going up in recent years. We concluded that as spending went up teen birth rates went down.

It is really important that we keep funding healthcare for pregnant teens and that we keep healthcare and pregnancy programs open to teens because they still deserve the rights to healthcare. We are young women and we want other young women to be safe and have as many opportunities as any other person. These programs also help to spread awareness of these young women's experiences and how pregnancy impacts them and we think it's really important for people to understand and not judge.

Year	Child and Family Health Spending, actual (thousands)	Child and Family Health Spending, adj 2025 (thousands)	# of Teen Births
2012	$33,764	$47,530.43	3338
2013	$35,665	$49,418.36	2891
2014	$40,616	$55,403.80	2732
2015	$35,497	$48.464.33	2408
2016	$17,573	$23,667.58	2215
2017	$18,099	$23,781.46	2125
2018	$23,302	$29,996.93	1814
2019	$24,810	$31,450.33	1803
2020	$33,646	$41,616.43	1631
2021	$33,319	$40,643.06	1581
2022	$35,801	$40,631.46	1496
2023	$38,539	$41,104.06	
2024	$55,393	$57,308.48	
Source	Minnesota Management and Budget	bls.gov	The Star Tribune

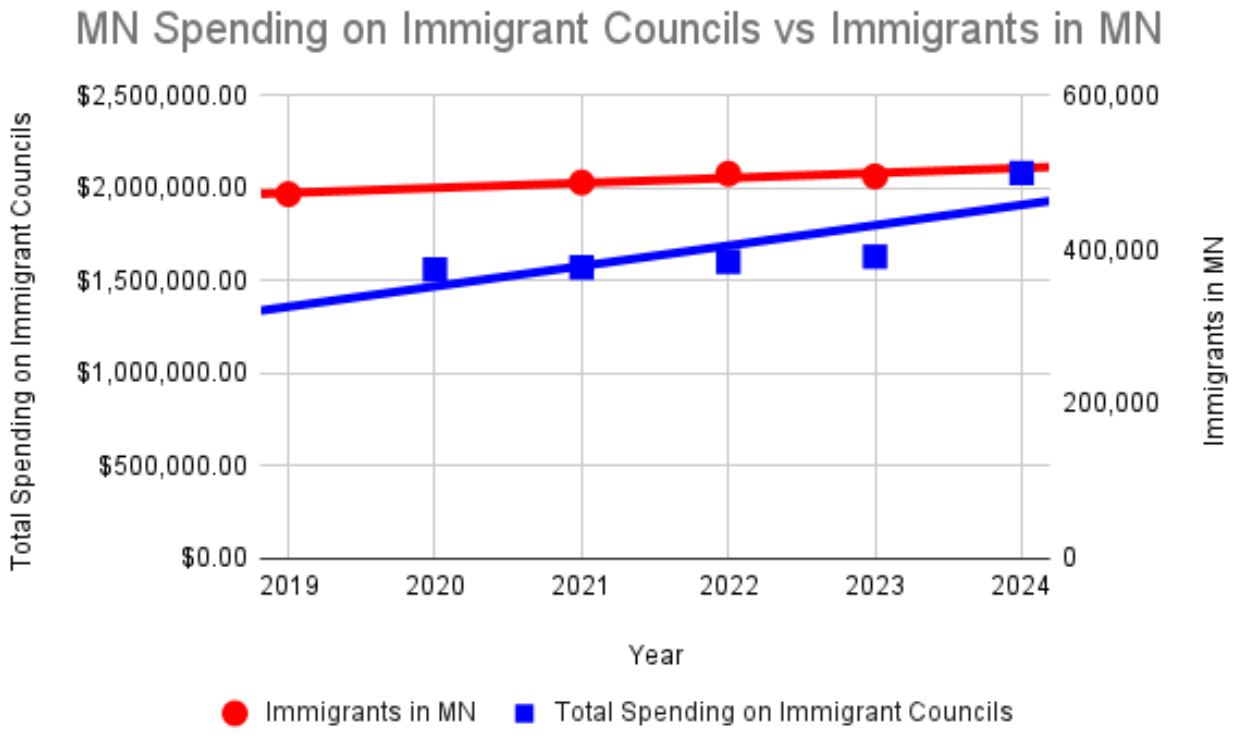
In order to keep young women and girls safe, we need to continue funding for child and family health programs.

Group 15

MN Spending on Immigrant Councils vs. Immigrants in MN

Touly V. (67A), Alexander M. (66B), Carmela M. (65B), and Sami K. (64A)

Sandra Salinas came from Argentina to the US in hopes to start a career and become successful, but without knowing the challenges she was going to face on her journey. Before arriving in the US, Sandra had worked as a visual merchandiser for a popular shoe brand, so she had planned to seek a similar job. In Minnesota, Sandra got a job at a retail store and worked there throughout the pandemic, but working her way up professionally wasn't easy. From learning about workplace culture and communication styles to experiencing racism in previous jobs. It felt like many opportunities were being passed up only because Sandra was an immigrant, but she persevered and today she finds herself a successful professional.



We are studying the correlation between MN spending on immigrant councils vs. immigrants in MN. Our financial data came from finalized state budgets and our immigrant count came from the MN Compass. The money that is being spent is increasing over time for the following councils: Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, Council for Latino affairs, and Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans. For example, in 2020 the budget for the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans was $510,000 but in 2024 it was $623,000, an extra $113,000 in just 4 years. In addition, the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs; in 2020, spent $519,000 to give Latino people asylum. In 2024, the spending on Latino Affairs increased by $145,000. Likewise, the money spent on the council for Asian Pacific Minnesotans was $510,000 in 2020 and increased to $623,000 in 2024, an increase of $113,000. The number of immigrants that are coming into the US is growing over time as well.

Immigrant councils are organizations or committees which address immigrant related issues and provide assistance in legal matters. Increased Minnesota spending on immigrant councils will provide the funding needed for the expanded immigrant councils activities that help and support immigrants.

Year	Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (actual)	Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (actual)	Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans (actual)	Total Spending (adj 2025)	Immigrants in MN
2019					472,231
2020	$531,000	$519,000	$510,000	$1,560,000	
2021	$532,000	$525,000	$515,000	$1,572,000	487,445
2022	$544,000	$534,000	$525,000	$1,603,000	498,826
2023	$552,000	$544,000	$534,000	$1,630,000	495,352
2024	$795,000	$664,000	$623,000	$2,082,000	
Sources	State Budgets			bls.gov	MN Compass

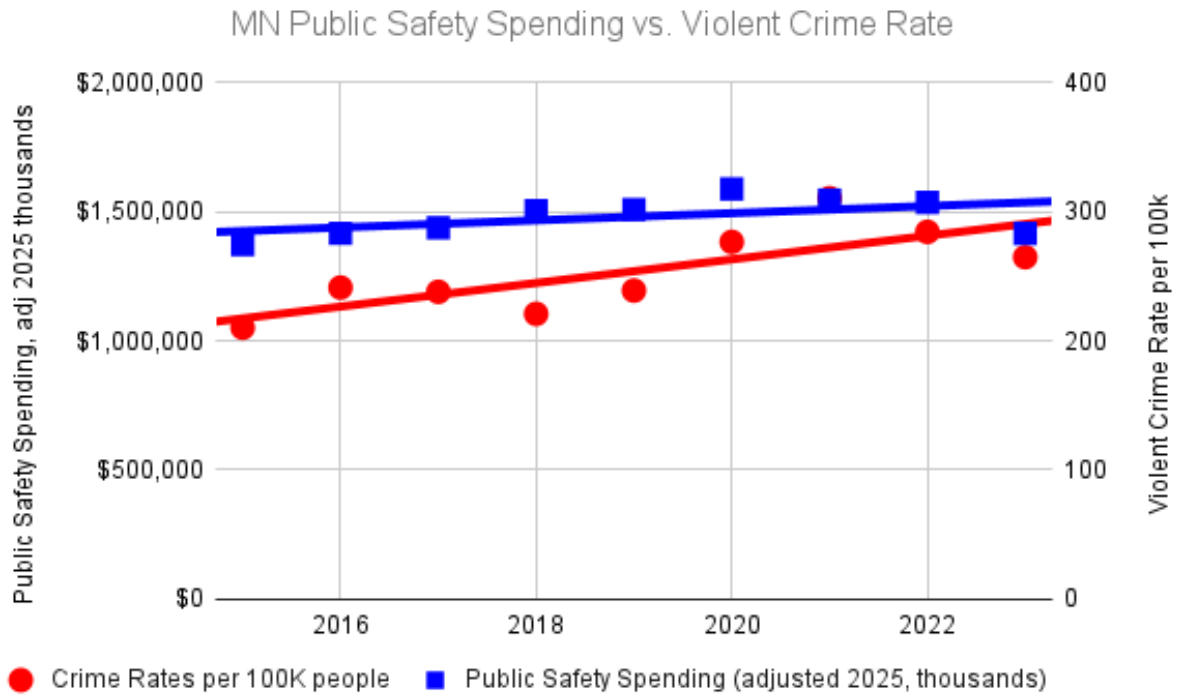
As the number of immigrants to Minnesota has continued to increase, more spending on Immigrant Councils can help support them as they transition.

Group 16

State Funding for Public Safety and Corrections vs. Violent Crime Rates

Penny L. (65B), Miles H. (66B), Sam J. (64B), Vaughn N. (66B),
and Tal M. W.(65B)

On July 21, 2022, an innocent 41 year old named Gary Bogatz, was given a 5 year sentence in prison for a false account of arson. While wrongfully incarcerated, Gary was victim to multiple forms of abuse, from both prisoners and guards, in terrible, and overcrowded conditions. This January, he wrote an article about the experience and torture that followed him even after he was released. Within the first few months of his imprisonment, Gary was punished for his cell-mate's poor behavior, even though Gary had no involvement. Rather than investigating the situation, guards instead beat and pepper sprayed Gary, leaving him beaten, temporarily blind, and alone in his cell with nothing for 24 hours. Soon after, there was a fourteen day lock down because of a COVID outbreak among prisoners during a heat wave, in which they only allowed him two showers and one phone call. Once tested negative, he was transferred from St. Cloud into "a too small cell", with no air conditioning in the hot summer, with proven instances of lead poisoning in the water, in an overpopulated and understaffed correctional facility in Faribault.



The one 'good' part of Gary's experience was getting into the Prison Fellowship Academy, a "life changing" program that actually helped, which is unable to operate apart from the rest of the Department of Corrections. After being subjected to many, many, more hardships he finally won his appeal and was released December 23, 2023. Even though Gary got an extremely rare 'happy' ending, he is still facing the lasting mental and physical ramifications of the experience. He says that "The way we "correct" is wrong. We are not providing our inmates a fighting chance to rehabilitate. We are instead making people fight a system that is abusing them."

We studied the correlation between state funding for Public Safety and Corrections vs. violent crime rates. We found this data in the EOY budget reports from the last ten years. Our first line (blue), shows that public safety spending has been slowly increasing over the last decade. Our second line (red), shows that crime rates have still been increasing, and at a more turbulent and drastic rate over the last decade. Together, these lines show that the spending efforts made have not made an overall successful impact at decreasing crime rates.

We ask policy makers to input more of the public spending into improving correctional facilities, as well as other initiatives to decrease crime rates. By increasing the number of tax dollars put into the correctional programs, we believe the overall experience and treatment of incarcerated people, as well as the outcome, will improve. The current state of correctional facilities needs to improve and we can't let crime rates continue the way that they're headed. By increasing the spending within proven programs like cognitive behavior therapy, employment, and job training, we can expect a decrease in incarcerated people and lower future expenditures.

Year	Public Safety Spending (actual, thousands)	Public Safety Spending (adjusted 2025, thousands)	Crime Rates per 100K people
2015	$1,005,019	$1,372,160	210.1
2016	$1,078,120	$1,416,612	241.2
2017	$1,094,258	$1,437,817	237.9
2018	$1,168,904	$1,504,743	220.8
2019	$1,190,050	$1,508,563	238.9
2020	$1,284,418	$1,588,685	276.6
2021	$1,266,661	$1,545,094	310.5
2022	$1,353,431	$1,536,043	284.4
2023	$1,327,497	$1,415,852	264.8
Sources	EOY Budget Reports	BLS.gov inflation calculator	FBI Clearinghouse

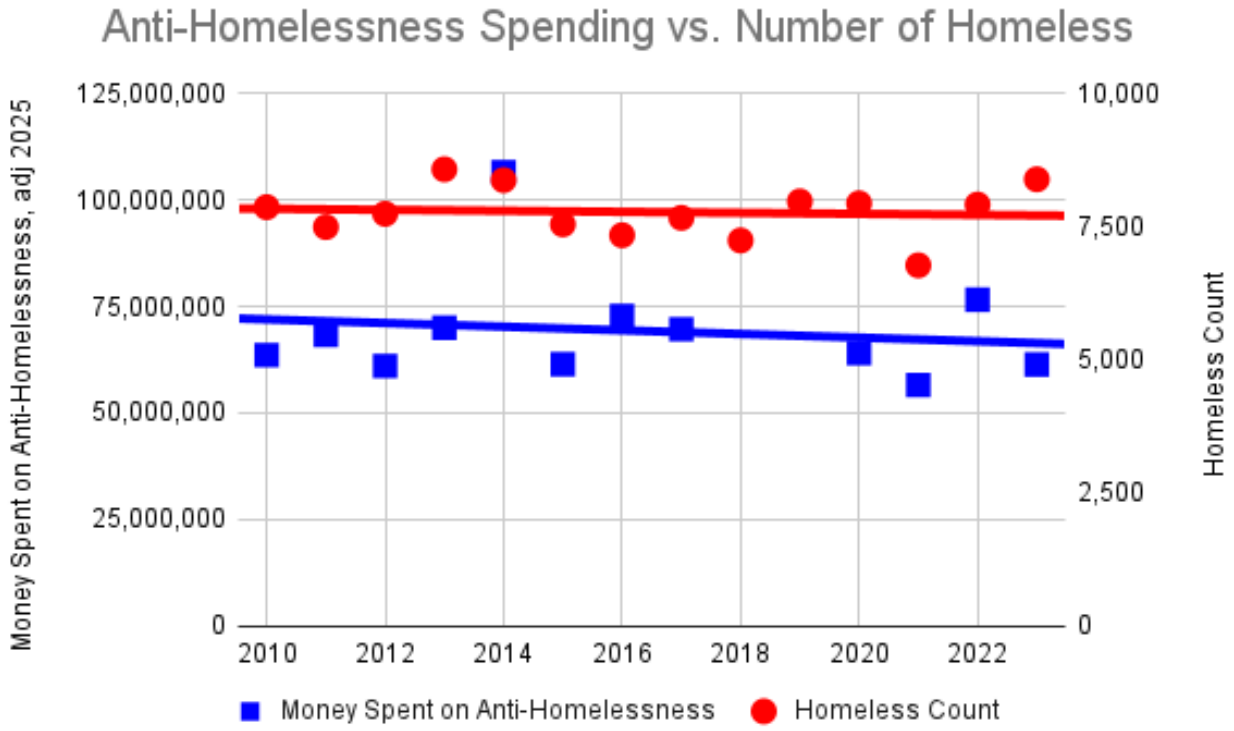
Since data from the last ten years shows increased spending efforts alone haven't been effective overall at decreasing crime rates, better investment is needed.

Group 17

Anti-Homelessness Spending in MN vs. Number of Homeless People

Crosby A. (64B), Reign M. (65B), Oliver F. (64B), and Padraig T. (67B)

When Ethan Christy was in 9th grade (he is now 22) he had alcoholic parents that had gotten many evictions; his dad would point his guns at Ethan and his mom. He had reached out to Child Protective Services multiple times but they did nothing. Finally he went to his principal and asked if he could participate in a program which allowed disadvantaged students to graduate early. His principal said no. “Ok I’m just not going to school” Ethan said. He dropped out at the age of 15 and drove to his two jobs on a moped. He slept on friends' couches and park benches. At 16 he saved up enough to buy a car and slept in it on cold winter nights. However, he spent tons of money on drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and cocaine, it was hard enough to find a place to stay as a minor now he was almost out of money. When he got a phone call from his friend who had just got out of jail after overdosing the same drug Ethan was taking the call convinced him to quit and he drove down to a Walmart parking lot and started living there, he showered at the gym across the street had two new jobs and saved up enough money to rent an apartment and begin his new life.



We are studying the rate of homeless people compared to anti homeless funds. We got our data from trusted sources and from old graphs that contained data like governors, bls.gov.budget. Each line on the graph shows the amount of funds spent on homeless people during each year compared to the amount of homeless people in Minnesota. We are trying to find a way where the amount of homeless people can decrease by changing the amount of funds in the anti-homeless funds to find where we can start seeing changes this is because in the past years there has been less or no change at all to the amount of homeless people.

We're asking for a change in the current amount of anti-homeless spending and trying to get a change in the amount of homeless people. What's expected is that we can see changes in the numbers of the homeless people and overtime it should rapidly decrease, making it lower than the previous numbers.

Year	$$$ spent on anti-homelessness	$$$ spent on anti-homelessness inflation adjusted	number of overall homeless people
2010	43,384,000	63,602,517	7,869
2011	47,384,000	68,351,274	7,495
2012	43,548,000	61,032,522	7,744
2013	50,768,000	70,034,399	8,581
2014	78,748,000	106,580,226	8,377
2015	45,198,000	61,430,302	7,546
2016	54,298,000	72,805,973	7,341
2017	52,798,000	69,670,956	7,668
2018			7,243
2019			7,977
2020	64,048,000	64,048,000	7,940
2021	56,584,000	56,548,000	6,775
2022	67,798,000	76,605,412	7,917
2023	57,798,000	61,372,292	8,393
2024	814,098,000	838,516,630	9,182
Sources			PIT Counts

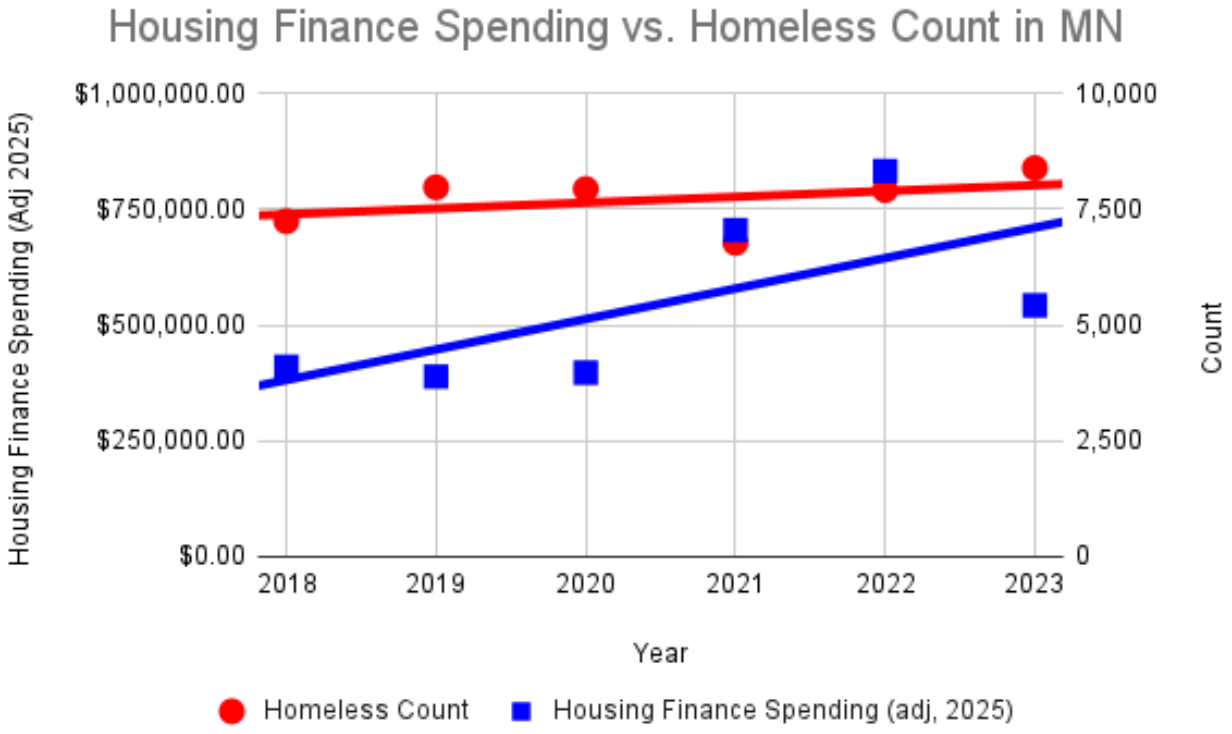
As the amount spent on anti-homelessness increased the number of homeless people decreased. Spending increases (like 2024) go a long way toward ending homelessness.

Group 18

Housing Finance Spending vs. Homeless Count in MN

Charlie S. (64A), Lajlim K. (67A), Jacob A. (66A), and Khalyl C. (65B)

Jacob Williams was homeless on and off for 10 years. Stuck in the streets of Minneapolis, he was hit in the head with a crowbar and sustained a life altering brain injury. This led to multiple seizures even after he was out of the streets. He can't do most of the things he used to be able to, like BMX competitions and tattoo art. He tried to get into stand up comedy but he couldn't even remember words he used in his jokes. He eventfully found help and managed to get off the streets with homeless programs. Although his condition is worsening, he has found the help that he needs. This issue could've been prevented if Minnesota spent more money on housing for homeless people.



We are studying data on homelessness rates and comparing them to multiple different programs to prevent or get people off the streets. As homeless spending goes up, the homeless count slowly goes up in relation to the spending. Government spending on welfare, rent deposits, and other government aid can lead to a lower amount of homeless people, this is because these programs prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.

We hope you can spend more money on helping people get out the streets, like homeless shelters and other government aid to help people get back on their feet. The risk is that people spiral back into homelessness, the issue is that sometimes helping homeless people isn't just as simple as government aid and shelters. you have a special opportunity, the opportunity to let everybody have a home and work with Minnesota's economy, if you invest in getting homeless people back on their feet, they will eventually work and spend in Minnesota which is beneficial for the economy. The expected result is less people in the streets and more people contributing to a better Minnesota.

Year	Housing Finance Spending (actual)	Housing Finance Spending (adj, 2025)	Homeless Count
2018	$317,170	$408,992	7,243
2019	$306,054	$387,969	7,977
2020	$320,626	$396,580	7,940
2021	$577,887	$704,916	6,775
2022	$733,967	$832,998	7,917
2023	$508,264	$542,093	8,393
Source	Housing Finance Budget	bls.gov	PIT Counts

We believe that funding house finance will help homeless people and benefit Minnesota as a whole in more ways than we can count.



Special thanks to the Assistance League of Minneapolis and Saint Paul who gave a generous grant to pay for our bus to attend the Capitol, tripods for the displays, and for the project covers for these briefing books.