



MINNDEPENDENT

Written testimony from Tim Benz, President, MINNDEPENDENT

Chair Kresha and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Tim Benz; I serve as President of MINNDEPENDENT. We are the largest organization supporting and advocating for Minnesota's nonpublic schools – we represent 188 nonpublic schools that educate more than 42,000 students across all parts of Minnesota. I am writing to support HF3493 (DE1 amendment) which makes great strides to ensure each Minnesota student has access to a safe and secure educational experience.

Beginning in 2020, MINNDEPENDENT and our fellow nonpublic school partners have advocated for extending school safety funding to cover students in all sectors. When one type of student is excluded, that creates an opportunity for harm.

HF3493-DE1 closes that gap and ensures stable, reliable, and flexible resources to help schools prepare, respond and administer holistic and comprehensive plans for safe school communities.

This legislation allows for a wide range of uses - including security improvements, staff training, mental health resources, and counseling.

Minnesota has a proud 50-year history of treating each student equitably for critical essential services – including busing, counseling, nursing and learning materials.

Key words in statutes include, “it is in **the public interest**...so that the health, welfare and safety of the children, while using the public highways of the state, shall be protected.”

It also references, “**every school pupil in the state** will share equitably in education benefits...”

These statutes affirm certain programs are for the “common good” of ALL students in Minnesota. Safe and secure schools are the most “common good.”

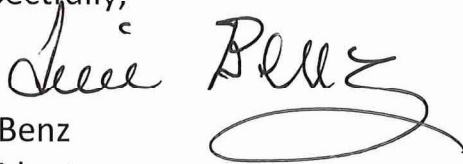
What happened on August 27 at Annunciation Catholic School must never happen again.

The time is now to enact legislation that provides stable, reliable and flexible resources and help ensure a safe and secure learning environment for each student.

The students supported by these critical services live in your neighborhoods and are members of your community.

I urge you to support this legislation for the safety and security of Minnesota’s students.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Benz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Tim Benz
President