



March 11, 2026

Hennepin County Board of Commissioners
Hennepin County Government Center
300 South Sixth Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55487

Dear Hennepin County Board of Commissioners:

On behalf of the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA), whose membership represents the elected sheriffs responsible for protecting the largest jurisdictions across the United States, we write to express our strong support for Hennepin County Sheriff Dawanna Witt and to convey our serious concern regarding the circumstances currently facing her office.

Across the country, sheriffs are entrusted by the voters with a solemn and independent constitutional responsibility: to safeguard public safety, operate detention facilities, and carry out the lawful duties of the office without political interference. That responsibility is particularly significant in a county the size and complexity of Hennepin County, where the sheriff's office manages critical functions including jail operations, court security, forensic laboratory services, and countywide law enforcement services.

Sheriff Witt and her agency have been placed in the middle of a contentious political debate involving federal immigration enforcement policies and local political priorities. These disputes—while political in nature—have had real operational consequences for the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office. The sheriff has publicly stated that her office has been unfairly characterized and used as a “scapegoat” amid competing political narratives about cooperation with federal authorities.

When local political disagreements begin to undermine the operational stability of a sheriff's office—particularly through budgetary constraints, staffing challenges, or public criticism that diminishes the authority of the office—it places both deputies and the public they serve at risk.

Sheriffs must be able to make operational decisions based on law, professional judgment, and the needs of public safety—not political pressure. The men and women who serve under Sheriff Witt deserve the full confidence and support of county leadership so they can focus on their mission: protecting the residents of Hennepin County.

The Major County Sheriffs of America urges county leadership to respect the constitutional authority of the Office of Sheriff. Additionally, we ask that the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office has reassurance that they are provided the necessary resources to recruit, retain, and support personnel tasked with protecting the community. Actions and rhetoric that undermine the legitimacy or operational independence of the Sheriff are detrimental to public safety and harmful to the men and women who protect and serve the community.

Public safety should never become collateral damage in political disputes. Regardless of where one stands on broader policy debates, the operational effectiveness of a sheriff's office must remain a shared priority.

Sheriff Witt was elected by the people of Hennepin County to lead their sheriff's office. She deserves the professional respect, institutional support, and working partnership necessary to carry out that responsibility effectively.

The Major County Sheriffs of America stands with Sheriff Witt and with the deputies and professional staff of the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office who continue to serve their community every day.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Gualtieri', with a stylized, cursive script.

Sheriff Bob Gualtieri
President, Major County Sheriffs of America

CC:

The Honorable Dawanna Witt, Hennepin County Sheriff
Jodi Wentland, Hennepin County Administrator
Daniel Rogan, Hennepin County Deputy Administrator
Kareem Murphy, Hennepin County Deputy Administrator
Minnesota Sheriffs' Association
National Sheriffs' Association