



MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH
MINNESOTA JUDICIAL CENTER
25 REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BLVD.
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155

JEFFREY SHORBA
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April 7, 2025

State Representative Tina Liebling, Committee Co-Chair
State Representative Peggy Scott, Committee Co-Chair
Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee

Chair Liebling, Chair Scott, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the judges and staff of the Minnesota Judicial Branch, I write in support of H.F. 2300, the Judiciary budget bill. While this bill does not include full funding of the Judicial Branch's biennial budget request, we appreciate the thoughtful and targeted investments reflected in the bill.

The proposed funding in this bill supports a modest onetime compensation increase for judicial staff, covers the employer's share of anticipated healthcare cost increases, and addresses rising lease expenses at the Minnesota Judicial Center. These investments reflect a recognition of the essential role that judges and court staff play in maintaining a fair and functioning justice system. We sincerely thank Chair Liebling, Chair Scott, and committee members for prioritizing these needs within a very constrained budget target. This funding helps ensure that we do not need to divert resources from core court functions to cover basic operational costs.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that even with the onetime increase, the Judicial Branch continues to face significant compensation challenges. Judicial officer and staff salaries remain significantly behind other public-sector employers in Minnesota. This ongoing disparity puts the Judicial Branch at a competitive disadvantage and threatens our ability to maintain a high-performing court system over the long term. We hope the Legislature will continue to work with us in the future to address these long-term challenges.

We are also thankful for the temporary funding and carry forward authority to address the rising costs and increasing deficits in the Judicial Branch's Psychological Services program,

statewide Jury program, and Court Interpreter programs. We also greatly appreciate the temporary funding and carry forward authority for the branch's Cyber Security Program which is vital in maintaining the security of the public, private, and sealed data involved in the judicial system. To ensure we can make the most effective and strategic use of these appropriations, we respectfully request that carry forward authority be extended through June 30, 2029.

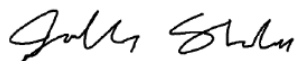
The onetime funding for the new Justice Partner Access application and for compliance with federal digital accessibility standards represents a meaningful step forward in enhancing systemwide efficiency and ensuring equal access to court information. These investments are key to our continued efforts to promote transparency and fairness. However, both initiatives come with ongoing operational costs not currently funded in the bill. We look forward to continuing conversations on how to sustain these important efforts over the long term.

Finally, we thank the committee for including the Judicial Branch's three policy proposals in the bill. These measures will help modernize statutory language and improve court processes for judges, staff, and court users across Minnesota. We are also especially appreciative of the inclusion of real estate provisions under the Judicial and Staff Safety and Security Act, which will help strengthen protections and improve safety for judicial officers.

We acknowledge the state's challenging budget circumstances and understand the difficult decisions involved. While we were disappointed that the budget target provided to the House Judiciary Committee was not sufficient to fully fund the Judicial Branch's request, we commend Chair Liebling, Chair Scott, and committee members for their thoughtful and resourceful approach in allocating their budget.

The Minnesota Judicial Branch appreciates the dedication and support of the House Judiciary Committee this session. We recognize our shared commitment to upholding justice and ensuring a fair and accessible legal system for all Minnesotans. We value our strong partnership with the Legislature and look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts to secure the resources necessary to fulfill our constitutional responsibilities.

With gratitude,



Jeffrey Shorba
State Court Administrator



2550 University Ave W, Suite 350-S
St. Paul, MN 55114

April 7, 2025

Representative Peggy Scott, Co-Chair
Representative Tina Liebling, Co-Chair
House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee

Greetings Chairs Scott and Liebling,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the A25 DE amendment. This amendment captures anticipated budget savings (\$10M) from the Cannabis Expungement Board in FY25 and cancels it to the bottom line.

I appreciate the budget challenges the legislature is facing this session. I also appreciate the willingness of your fiscal staff to continue to monitor our budget to find the right balance between maximizing FY25 cancellations and minimizing risk to our ability to cover remaining FY 25 expenses.

As you know, the CEB began operations just one year ago and the ramp up has been slow. However, we have a lot of forward momentum right now and may have planned expenses that are not reflected in the state accounting system. We will continue to work with your fiscal staff to accurately reflect our anticipated budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James R. Rowader Jr".

Jim Rowader
Executive Director

Equal Opportunity Employer



Legal Services Advocacy Project

April 7, 2025

The Honorable Peggy Scott
Co-Chair
Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
2nd Floor, Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Tina Liebling
Co-Chair
Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
5th Floor, Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF 2300 (Judiciary Finance Omnibus Bill)

Dear Co-Chairs Scott and Liebling and Members of the Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee:

The Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) writes in appreciation of the inclusion of the revisions to the definition of “custodian” (in Article 2, Section 11) and the protections for homeowners, clarifying the right to postpone a foreclosure sale (Article 3) in the Judiciary Finance Omnibus Bill. LSAP is a statewide division of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, providing policy, legislative, and administrative advocacy on behalf of Legal Aid statewide. Legal Aid’s clients include Minnesotans who have low incomes, elderly Minnesotans and Minnesotan with disabilities.

Last year, the definition of “custodian” in Minnesota Statutes, section 518B.01, subdivision 2, was put in place to give custodians notice when an order for protection was lifted to address a horrific event. Unfortunately, the amended definition not only unintentionally swept in a far broader swath of individuals than necessary and had the potential to place survivors of violence at risk. HF 2781 amends the definition that was created last session to ensure it reaches those for whom it was intended

With respect to the foreclosure protections contained in HF 2300, due to a recent court ruling, more residential foreclosures must be conducted judicially and the current law regarding the ability of a homeowner to postpone a foreclosure sale – giving them more time to try to save the home – is just not clear. The provisions in Article 3 make it clear that this important and effective tool is available to homeowners (and mortgagees) not just in foreclosures by advertisement, but also in judicial foreclosures.

LSAP is grateful to the committee for including these two important provisions in HF 2300, the Judiciary Finance Omnibus Bill.

Sincerely,

Ron Elwood
Supervising Attorney



April 8, 2025

Re: HF 2300

Dear Co-Chairs Liebling and Scott, and House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee Members:

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), on behalf of Minnesota's 87 counties, **writes to provide feedback and general policy considerations regarding HF 2300.**

Counties are grateful that HF 2300 limits the judicial safety provisions (43.7-43.8 A25-0061 amendment) to judges only. We understand that many public-facing employees in the judicial branch as well as county government may seek the protections offered in HF 2300 in the future, but allowing counties to adapt to this new legislation with a smaller group of applicants will ensure a more efficient and effective process.

There are, however, two areas of concern that remain for counties that we want to express to the committee: liability and cost.

Only certain staff at counties would be assigned to access this information since it's stored across many systems—property tax payments, permit applications, division of lots, and so forth. Some information is stored in paper tract books and digital image scans of those books, which are incredibly difficult to redact. Counties would be relying on very few people to complete the work and if it is not completed fully and accurately, counties would be liable under the Data Practices Act for violations of this new law. This is a problem for all counties, but particularly small counties that have only one or two employees that are able to work on any requests that come in.

Since this law may be the basis for additional public employee groups—judicial staff, county attorneys, peace officers, correctional employees, etc.—counties remain concerned about our level of liability. Considerable taxpayer funds could be spent defending lawsuits and exclusive remedy is one way to mitigate this liability.

Over the last two weeks, counties conducted a survey of employees who would be responsible for completing the work of redacting and masking real property records. To complete the work for one property, smaller counties estimate 8-24 hours, and larger counties estimate 24-48 hours. Surveyed counties estimated that the lowest paid employee would cost \$25-\$40 per hour and the highest paid employee would cost \$45-\$60 per hour, leading to a range of \$200-\$2,880, per property. **Counties ask members to consider language that allows counties to recoup up to \$3,000 per application.**

We appreciate your considerations of these concerns and hope to continue engaging collaboratively with stakeholders as the session continues.

Sincerely,

Nathan Zacharias, Technology Policy Analyst
Association of Minnesota Counties

April 8, 2025

Chair Liebling, Chair Scott, and House Judiciary and Civil Law Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Judiciary appropriations omnibus (HF 2300). Because civil rights laws are foundational to the state of Minnesota, the Department of Human Rights appreciates the committee funding the agency's base budget for the biennium. However, MDHR is concerned that the operating adjustment included in HF 2300 does not reflect the operating adjustment outlined in the Governor and Lt. Governor's budget and is insufficient to meet agency obligations.

MDHR is a people-powered agency, and it is the talented team within our department that brings the Minnesota Human Rights Act to life every day. MDHR is navigating a substantial increase in its workload, and it is important that the agency can continue to ensure that every Minnesotan is protected by, and benefits from, our state civil rights laws, as required by statute.

The operating adjustment is intended to address the rising employer-paid health care contributions, salary and compensation-related costs, IT services, and other direct operating costs – all of which are essential to fully supporting this team.

Please feel free to contact me or Nico Bauer (nico.bauer@state.mn.us), MDHR's Government Relations Director, with any questions.

Thank you for all your and your staff's hard work on this budget, and we look forward to our continue conversations.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Lucero
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Human Rights