



# Minnesota House of Representatives

September 5, 2024

The Honorable Tim Walz  
Governor, State of Minnesota  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz:

We write to express our profound concern about a recent social media post on Attorney General Ellison's personal/campaign account on X (formerly Twitter). On Monday, September 2, 2024 at 4:33 p.m., Attorney General Ellison (or some other individual controlling his account) posted a short message in Portuguese thanking Brazil: "obrigado Brasil!"

Given the context of recent events in Brazil, this post has raised significant concern about what exactly Attorney General Ellison was celebrating in Brazil. As you are likely aware, the government of Brazil has been engaged in an effort to censor opposition voices including opposition government officials. This culminated in court decisions ordering X, an American company, to censor certain speakers in Brazil. When X refused to do so, and its owner, Elon Musk (an American citizen), spoke out in opposition to this censorship effort, a Brazilian Supreme Court justice initiated a criminal investigation against Musk. On Friday, the entire X platform was blocked in Brazil by a panel of the Supreme Court that included the same justice who had initiated a criminal investigation based on Musk's speech.

Whatever one may think of Musk and his business career, his resistance to illiberal and authoritarian government control of speech stands in a proud American tradition. To take just one prominent example, when the Chinese communist government cracked down on student demonstrations in the Tiananmen Square Massacre, most Americans were outraged. As Secretary of State Tony Blinken recently stated on the 35th anniversary of the massacre, "the United States stands in solidarity with those who continue the struggle for human rights and individual freedom."

Many have interpreted Attorney General Ellison's post as a break with this tradition. Instead of standing in solidarity with those struggling for individual freedom, it appears he is expressing support for an authoritarian crackdown on free speech. This is particularly troubling given the oath each of us took to "support the constitution of the United States and of this state," as well as

the special role of our state attorney general to uphold the constitutional rights of all Minnesotans.

Governor Walz, while we have disagreements with your record in this area, you have professed support for First Amendment principles. We therefore expect that you are troubled by Attorney General Ellison's apparent support for censorship of opposition voices in one of the largest democracies in the Western Hemisphere, and we urge you to join us in condemning that authoritarian censorship.

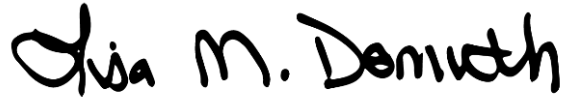
Additionally, we believe it is necessary to receive clarity about the circumstances surrounding the September 2, 2024 post in question. In particular, did Attorney General Ellison post himself or authorize this post? If so, was he thanking Brazil for its crackdown on speech, or for something else? If Attorney General Ellison's post was referencing the Brazilian government's censorship of opposition speech, we are gravely concerned about his ability to faithfully perform his duties as Minnesota Attorney General.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Harry Niska  
State Representative District 31A



Lisa Demuth  
Republican Leader District 13A



Paul Torkelson  
State Representative District 15B



Pam Altendorf  
State Representative District 20A



Jeff Backer  
State Representative District 9A



Ben Bakeberg  
State Representative District 54B



Dave Baker  
State Representative District 16B



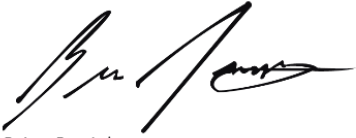
Peggy Bennett  
State Representative District 23A



Matt Bliss  
State Representative District 2B



John Burkel  
State Representative District 1A



Brian Daniels  
State Representative District 19A




Greg Davids  
State Representative District 26B



Ben Davis  
State Representative District 6A



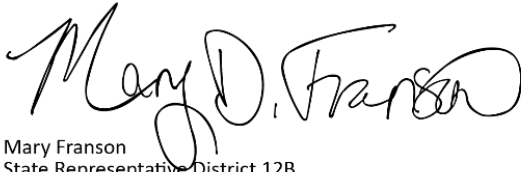
Jeff Dotseth  
State Representative District 11A



Elliott Engen  
State Representative District 36A



Marj Fogelman  
State Representative District 21B



Mary Franson  
State Representative District 12B



Dawn Gillman  
State Representative District 17A



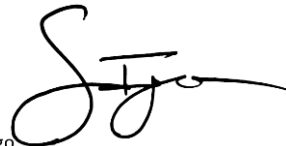
Bobbi Harder  
State Representative District 17B



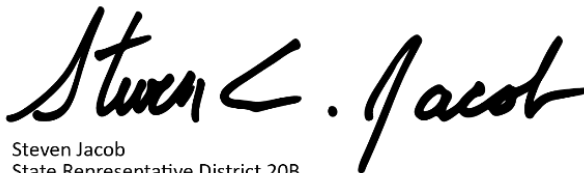
Josh Heintzeman  
State Representative District 6B



Walter Hudson  
State Representative District 30A



Spencer Igo  
State Representative District 7A



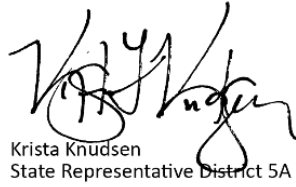
Steven Jacob  
State Representative District 20B



Jim Joy  
State Representative District 4B



Deb Kiel  
State Representative District 18



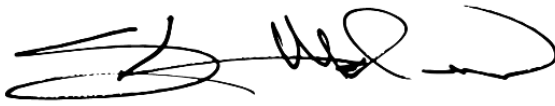
Krista Knudsen  
State Representative District 5A



Ron Kresha  
State Representative District 10A



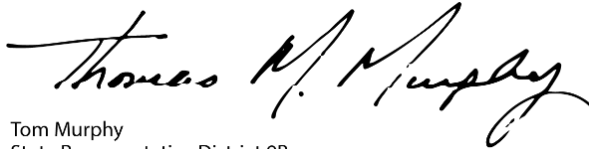
Joe McDonald  
State Representative District 29A



Shane Mekeland  
State Representative District 27A



Patricia Mueller  
State Representative District 23B



Tom Murphy  
State Representative District 9B



Jim Nash  
State Representative District 48A



Nathan Nelson  
State Representative District 11B



Paul Novotny  
State Representative District 30B



Tim O'Driscoll  
State Representative District 13B



Bernie Perryman  
State Representative District 14A



Duane Quam  
State Representative District 24A



Marion Rarick  
State Representative District 29B



Kristin Robbins  
State Representative District 37A



Joe Schomacker  
State Representative District 21A



Isaac Schultz  
State Representative District 10B



Peggy Scott  
State Representative District 31B



Roger Skraba  
State Representative District 3A



Chris Swedzinski  
State Representative District 15A



Dean Urdahl  
State Representative District 16A



Nolan West  
State Representative District 32A



Mike Wiener  
State Representative District 5B



Natalie Zeleznikar  
State Representative District 3B

CC: The Honorable Keith Ellison  
Attorney General, State of Minnesota  
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1400  
St. Paul, MN 55101