

The Minnesota District Judges Association (MDJA) membership comprises nearly 400 Judges across the State of Minnesota. It includes almost every District Court Judge, most Courts of Appeals Judges and Supreme Court Justices, and many retired and Senior Judges. MDJA's 2026 legislative priorities all seek to increase judicial and court staff safety. Specifically, MDJA supports the Minnesota Judicial Branch's (MJB) FY26-27 Security Priorities, including legislative authorization and funding for judicial officers to address home security risks and services to address personal data protections. MDJA will also carefully monitor the potential expansion of safety and privacy measures to additional elected officials to ensure the smooth implementation of the 2024 and 2025 Judicial and Court Staff Safety and Privacy Act.

## Judicial and Court Staff Safety

- MDJA supports critical investments in home security and monitoring systems for judicial officers and administrators as well as funding to provide services to remove or mask personal information from online sources. MDJA also supports the MJB and its priorities to continue courthouse security grants, a judicial security unit expansion, and a security detail for the Chief Justice.
- The safety of Minnesota's Judges, court staff, and members of their households are put at risk by the dissemination and perpetual Internet access of home addresses and personal information. Moreover, inappropriate communications, threats, and attempted physical attacks are a real concern for judges, staff, and family members. Investment in security priorities will help address these safety concerns.

*"The **chronic stress** of . . . safety threats . . . negatively impacts [my] sleep, cognition and well-being."*

- Minnesota Judicial Officer,  
MDJA Judicial Safety Survey (additional results on page 2).
- MJB Security Priorities for FY 26-27 are supported by MDJA and include:
  - Personal Data Protection - **\$376,000**
  - Home Security Allowance - **\$1,078,700**
  - Judicial Security Unit Expansion - **\$463,000**
  - Chief Justice Security Detail - **\$150,500**
  - Courthouse Security Grants - **\$1,000,000**

## JUDICIAL SAFETY SURVEY

In January 2024, the Minnesota District Judges Association conducted a survey to better understand the experiences and safety concerns of state judicial officers. 239 judges responded, which included current and retired district court judges and appellate judges. Their answers confirm that Minnesota is not immune from the nationwide outbreak of violence and threats directed against judicial officers. Violence and threats of violence occur not only in our courthouses but at judges' personal residences and in the community. These threats are often directed at judicial officers' families, including children. The following is a summary of their responses.

### Fast Stats

- 98% of judges have taken steps – such as limiting public personal information or safeguarding their homes – to increase personal safety because of their work. Almost all have done so at their own expense.<sup>1</sup>
- Over 80% of judges have taken steps to limit and protect their personal information.
- Almost 90% of responding judges have received inappropriate communications because of their work. 72% have received threats.
- 37% of judges have witnessed an attempted or actual physical attack while performing their job.
- Over 75% of responding judges worry about their safety because of their work “often” or “sometimes.” Most of these judges report that their worries negatively affect their judicial wellness and job satisfaction. Similar levels of concern are expressed for the safety of the judges' family members.
- 72% of responding judges have changed their personal behaviors – such as avoiding public events – because of concern for their safety.
- 46% of responding judges' family members have expressed they felt unsafe because of the judge's work.

### Noteworthy Comments

- Many judges noted an uptick in threatening behavior toward judges in recent years.
- Several judges shared threats against their minor children: pictures of a judge's minor children were posted online; a death threat was made against a judge's children, which noted they knew where the children went to school; and one judge stated, “[t]hreats to harm my children were particularly concerning. My children's school was only 3 blocks from the courthouse and they were prevented from walking to my work after school (to get home) because of the threat. I recall running into chambers and tearing up[.]”
- Many judges noted death threats. One stated that, “[t]he threats have involved very specific forms of torture[.]”
- A judge's chambers was firebombed.
- Someone attempted to break into a judge's home and then defecated near it. Another judge shared that someone created a fake video of a bomb exploding outside of the judge's home.
- Several judges noted that their home address has been compromised, and they have or are considering moving.

<sup>1</sup> When the personal safety measure had an associated cost.