

Judiciary Finance and Civil Law
Thursday, March 3, 2022 at 8:30 A.M.

Chair: Rep. Jamie Becker-Finn

Location: Remote Hearing

Chair Becker-Finn, Members:

I am John Kavanagh, Senior Counsel, with Minnesota Public Radio. I am appearing before you today representing the Minnesota Broadcasters Association, the Minnesota Newspaper Association, and MPR.

Our organizations have submitted a joint letter supporting the elimination of the proposed \$8 fee to view and download court documents on the MCRO system. The letter should be in today's hearing packet.

Minnesotans should not have to ration their research of court documents based upon their ability to afford access to public information. Our readers, viewers, listeners, and you expect us to be thorough and accurate in our reporting.

Attaching fees with no relation to the actual costs to provide this service and which simply go to the General Fund, serve only as an impediment to our work.

Already financially struggling local and regional news outlets would be hardest hit by the proposed fee. These organizations report stories important to their communities and are critical to American democracy. Minnesotans are best served by local and regional media with full access to public information.

We appreciate the Courts upgrade of the MCRO system and thank Chair Becker-Finn and Rep. Robbins for introducing House Files 3556 and 3041 to address our concerns.

Thank you and I will stand for questions.