MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH
STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE
MINNESOTA JUDICIAL CENTER
25 REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BLVD.
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155

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May 12, 2026

Members of the Conference Committee on S.F. 3432,

On behalf of the judges and staff of the Minesota Judicial Branch, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on S.F. 3432, the Safety and Security Package.

We appreciate the commitment shown by both the House and Senate to ensuring that justice remains to all Minnesotans through safe courthouses and judicial officers who are able to perform their constitutional duties free from intimidation and threats. We are grateful that both the House and Senate bills contain critical investments in judicial safety and security that will strengthen the Judicial Branch's ability to assess and respond to threats, improve coordination with law enforcement, and support much-needed security improvements in courthouses across the state. However, without full funding, the Branch will remain limited in its ability to provide consistent statewide protections for judges and court staff, and to provide limited security to the chief justice as they speak at public events.

It's for this reason that we respectfully ask the Conference Committee to support full funding for the Judicial Branch's safety and security request.

Judicial Safety and Security

The Senate position includes funding that would allow the Judicial Branch to provide personal data protection services and home security reimbursements to both judicial officers and court administrators, who face increasing threats related to their official duties. The Senate position also includes funding sufficient to provide a security detail of two officers to accompany the chief justice to public events. These protections reflect the increasing risks faced by judicial officers and court staff and the growing need for proactive security measures to mitigate risk.

<u>The Judicial Branch urges the Conference Committee to adopt the Senate position to fully fund the Judicial Branch's safety and security request.</u>

Other Judicial Branch funding

The Judicial Branch also urges the Conference Committee to adopt the Senate position and provide onetime operational adjustments to the Judicial Branch.

As a part of the 2025 budget agreement reached between the Legislature and Governor's Office, both the Legislative and Executive branches received operational adjustment funding to help cover unavoidable costs, including rising insurance premiums and the employer cost associated with Minnesota's new paid leave program. The Judicial Branch was not consulted during these negotiations, however, and did not receive a comparable operational adjustment.

Without a state appropriation to cover these unavoidable costs, the Judicial Branch will be forced to redirect funding currently dedicated to courtroom operations and direct public services. The funding contained in the Senate bill would help ensure the Judicial Branch can continue delivering timely access to justice and maintain accessible court services.

Thank you for your time, your attention, and your service on behalf of the people of Minnesota. We appreciate your partnership and look forward to continuing to work with you to support a safe, accessible, and efficient court system for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Shorba
State Court Administrator
Minnesota Judicial Branch