



March 2, 2022

Re: HF 3401 – Keep access to court documents free of charge

Dear Legislative Committee Participants:

Since court documents have been made viewable and printable online at no charge, I have been able to deliver low fee/no fee services to a number of clients because it was fast and simple to view the critical documents. It has truly changed how I am able to serve new clients. If this structure for viewing and printing court documents changes, I am not going to be able to deliver my services unless the potential client pays me a small retainer.

At a time when we have a tremendous need for pro bono and low fee services, charging a fee to view a court document is a disservice to a population that is already underserved with their legal needs.

I fully support keeping court document viewing on an online platform free. In this day and age, it is no longer reasonable to expect people to travel to the courthouse to look up a case for free. Solo and small attorneys do a tremendous amount of unrecognized pro bono/low fee services. The resource of viewing court documents online for free has helped us continue to offer those services. If that structure changes, solo and small firm attorneys will find ourselves doing less of that work because of the cost and time involved in a formerly cumbersome and expensive process. HF 3401 will help us to help the underserved. HF 3401 also serves the many people who are navigating the court system without any legal representation. It would be a shame to put a barrier back into place for those who are already struggling to access our justice system.

Sincerely,

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