

Minnesota Coalition on Government Information (MNCOGI)
House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee
January 12, 2023

Written testimony of Matt Ehling
MNCOGI board member

Dear Chair Becker-Finn and members of the House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information (MNCOGI), a non-partisan, nonprofit organization whose all-volunteer board focuses on government information policy. MNCOGI would like to thank Representatives Jordan and Scott for the collaborative work that resulted in amendment H0034DE1 (which amends House File 34).

MNCOGI worked on this amendment, and as I am unable to appear before the committee today to explain its function, I have submitted this written testimony to briefly detail its effect.

The amendment targets specific data for classification as “private data on individuals” (when relating to data on individuals) or “nonpublic data” (when relating to businesses or other non-natural persons) when such data is submitted to a political subdivision as part of a licensing program. The specific data that is classified pertains to:

- 1) tax returns;
- 2) bank account statements.

Under current law, there is no classification that would make this data “not public” on an ongoing basis when it is submitted to a political subdivision as part of a business license application. (Tax return data held elsewhere in Minnesota government — such as by the Department of Revenue — already has a “not public” classification, but there is no similar classification for such data when it is provided by a citizen to a political subdivision for business license approval purposes.)

Last year, when this matter first came before the legislature, MNCOGI spoke at length with Representative Jordan about the issue that underlies this bill. That issue relates to a City of Minneapolis licensing protocol that dates back some

decades, and requires applicants who wish to obtain certain kinds of liquor sales licenses to submit tax returns and bank accounts statements to verify the ownership and finances of the applicant business. The amendment is specifically designed to address those particular data issues, and deals with them within the context of political subdivision data, as opposed to under § 13.41, whose data classifications are specific to state-level professional licensing boards.

MNCOGI's board appreciates Rep. Jordan's attention to the data policy details that attend this bill and its underlying issues.

Sincerely,

Matt Ehling
MNCOGI board member