



The Office of
Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison
helping people afford their lives and live with dignity and respect • www.ag.state.mn.us

Rep. Michael Nelson (DFL) District: 40A
585 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Nelson and Members of the Committee,

I write to thank you for fully funding our operating adjustment request of \$2.335 million dollars. This funding allows us to retain talent and invest in the staff needed to do the work of the Office.

For fiscal year 2023, our General Fund appropriation is currently \$26.19 million dollars. Twenty years ago, the General Fund appropriation for Attorney General's Office appropriation was \$26.83 million, almost identical to our 2023 General Fund appropriation. But when you factor in inflation, that appropriation from 20 years ago is the equivalent of \$38.6 million in today's dollars. This means that our 2023 appropriation is worth 30% less in inflation-adjusted dollars than it was 20 years ago. Minnesota's population has since grown. Society has become more complex and more litigious. The challenges Minnesotans face in affording their lives and living with dignity, safety, and respect are more daunting by the day. We must close the gap between those challenges and the resources of the Attorney General's Office to help Minnesotans meet them.

Retaining an expert workforce is essential for the AGO to fulfill its duty to the state and serve and protect Minnesotans. Our attorneys earn less than public attorneys for local metro counties, and almost a third less than attorneys the U.S. Attorney's office. Sometimes our attorneys leave us for these other public law offices because they can earn more for their families there and still serve the public. When they do, their knowledge and expertise leaves with them. Funding our operating adjustment allows us to retain our talent.

The capacity of the administrative, non-legal side of the office has always been tight. While employees of the Office are very resourceful and continue to serve their colleagues well, the capacity of critical internal administrative functions like human resources, information technology and finance to meet the needs of the Office, are stretched beyond their limits. The policy, communications, and outreach functions of the Office also require enhancements to handle the increasing complexity of the work of the Attorney General's Office and contribute to a 21st-century Attorney General's Office that fully meets the needs of its clients and Minnesotans. Funding our operating adjustment allows us to invest in these staff.

Thank you for your work and thank you for including our operating adjustment request of \$2.335 million dollars. I respectfully, but sincerely, ask that you advocate for it strongly in conference negotiations with the Senate.



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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keith Ellison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Keith" being more prominent than the last name "Ellison".

Keith Ellison