



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

April 30, 2021

Re: HF1952 Omnibus State Government Finance Bill

Chair Nelson, Chair Kiffmeyer, and Conferees:

I write in support of the House's position on the budget for the Minnesota Attorney General's Office. Both the Governor's Budget and the House Budget fund the Attorney General's Office to a level that allows us to fulfil our statutory and Constitutional duties, and best serve Minnesotans. The position of the Senate does not provide essential funding needed for the Attorney General's Office to help Minnesotans afford their lives and live with dignity and respect.

For your information, the six change items for the Attorney General funded by the House are investments in technology, criminal enforcement, antitrust enforcement, fighting wage theft, recruitment and retention, and security. I assure you that each one of these budget items is needed to allow us to continue our work to deliver justice to the people of Minnesota, represent the State of Minnesota, and enforce the law of land.

As you consider the bill, I want to make sure you are aware that the Attorney General's Office adds monetary value both to the State of Minnesota and to your constituents. This Office is a regular net contributor to the State's budget: in recent years, the office has saved the State or returned to State coffers hundreds of millions of dollars. So far in FY21, the Office's lawsuits and settlements have generated over \$9 million for the state's general fund. Additionally, just last month, we announced an \$81 million settlement with the tobacco companies, and pursuant to the settlement an additional \$10 million will go into the general fund each year thereafter.

Earlier this year we also announced a nearly \$8 million settlement with McKinsey for their involvement in the opioid epidemic. That money will go directly to abatement of the opioid crisis through the Opioid Advisory Council that the Legislature established in 2019. In addition, the Office of the Attorney General also puts dollars directly back into the pockets of people and businesses, our constituents. Last year, our consumer action division returned \$5 million directly to Minnesotans' wallets.

Finally, I respectfully ask the conference committee to adopt the provisions from the House bill that expands the scope of the attorney general's jurisdiction to include civil investigation and enforcement of regulating voter intimidation, interference, and deceptive practices in elections. Protecting voters from intimidation is crucial to a healthy democracy.



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Thank you, Senators and Representatives, for your time and attention to funding a government that works for all Minnesotans and helps people afford their lives and live with dignity and respect.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keith Ellison". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Keith Ellison
Attorney General