



**April 7, 2026**

**Minnesota House of Representatives  
House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee  
Testimony in Opposition to H.F. 3698**

The Authors Guild respectfully submits the following testimony in opposition to H.F. 3698. With over 17,000 members, the Authors Guild is the oldest and largest professional association of published writers of all genres including historians, biographers, academicians, journalists, and other writers of nonfiction and fiction. Since its founding in 1912, the Guild has worked to promote the rights and professional interests of authors in various areas, including copyright, freedom of expression, and fair contracts.

We oppose H.F. 3698 because it has the potential to harm authors in the state of Minnesota. The bill prohibits any library in the state that receives funding from entering into or renewing any license for digital materials that contains prohibitions, several of which are commonplace in rights licensing agreements for digital materials. Among these prohibitions are limits on the number of times the library may loan digital materials and limitations on contract durations. These conditions are typical in electronic rights licensing for libraries and are designed to ensure that the license is economically viable.

We fear that by prohibiting Minnesota libraries from entering into licenses that contain these common terms that the legislature will impact the availability of books in Minnesota libraries. Publishers will likely not concede to changing the terms and their business model, and as a consequence, Minnesota libraries would not be able to license many new books or renew existing license for what could be a substantial portion of their catalogue. As such, this legislation could have the unintended consequence of impeding access to digital materials in Minnesota, as opposed to expanding it, and readers in Minnesota would be impacted.

In addition to harming readers, the legislation could also harm our members and other authors in Minnesota. Under a typical publishing contract, an author receives 25% of the

publisher's net receipts from the disposition of electronic licenses, including those to libraries. If publishers pull out of the Minnesota market, authors will be deprived of potential income at a time of historic economic precarity for the profession. According to the most recent Authors Guild income survey—the largest and most comprehensive of its kind—the median income for **full-time authors** from their books was \$10,000 in 2022, and their total median earnings from their book and other author-related income combined (books and other sources) was \$20,000. When looking at **full-time authors** whose books are in **commercial** markets (i.e, excluding academic, scholarly, and educational books), the median book income was \$15,000 and median author-related income was \$25,000. This means half of all full-time authors continue to earn below minimum wage in many states from *all* their writing related work, and well below the federal minimum wage of just \$7.25/hour from their books.

In conclusion, while the Authors Guild strongly believes that books should be available to libraries in every format, we object to a legislative approach that interferes with the balance of the market on which authors rely for their livelihoods.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'U. Kazi', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Umair Kazi  
Director of Policy & Advocacy  
The Authors Guild