

April 28, 2023

Chair Erin Murphy  
Senate State Government Committee  
3211 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Ginny Klevorn  
House State Government Committee  
581 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Jim Carlson  
Senate Elections Committee  
3221 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Mike Freiberg  
House Elections Committee  
381 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairs and State Government Conference Committee members:

On behalf of the farmers, workers, small businesses and other concerned citizens our organizations represent, we write to thank both the Senate and House for approving increased funding for the Attorney General's Office (AGO) in FY24-25, as it will help protect fair, open and competitive markets in Minnesota and build a strong economy. We would urge the committee to adopt the House position on the AGO budget, which includes an additional \$2.5 million in one-time funding for antitrust and nonprofit oversight.

The increased concentration of economic power touches nearly every aspect of our economy. Between 1997 and 2012 approximately 75% of industries became more consolidated, while the US economy grew 50% more concentrated since 2005.<sup>i</sup> At the current rate of consolidation, it is estimated that the US will have just one company by 2070.<sup>ii</sup>

The growing power of corporate monopolies harms Minnesotans, as giant firms use their power to raise prices, lower wages, offshore jobs, hurt smaller businesses, and influence public policy and politics. The average American's wages are 20% lower because of monopoly power.<sup>iii</sup> Corporate profits and the lack of competition are responsible for nearly half of recent increases in inflation.<sup>iv</sup> While people are making less and paying more, the number of small businesses has declined and family farmers are making less than they ever have.<sup>v</sup>

Given all of this, it should come as no surprise that 62% of Minnesota voters believe corporate monopolies are harming the state. The funding in both versions of HF1830 will begin to address these challenges by providing the Attorney General with additional resources to prosecute bad corporate actors, something 59% of Minnesotans support.<sup>vi</sup>

Both versions of HF1830 take several important steps towards addressing the immense power of dominant corporations. The one-time funding for establishment of a multistate litigation fund will provide the Attorney General resources to engage in complex multistate litigation. The ability to join other states in fighting anticompetitive conduct is essential to helping Minnesotans afford their lives.

The increased base funding for the Attorney General's Office both bodies approved will provide additional resources for the antitrust division. While the antitrust team has filed important antitrust lawsuits against pesticide manufacturers, pharmaceutical giants, opioid manufacturers and health insurance companies, this talented team is also very small with only 2.5 FTEs.

This is fewer antitrust attorneys than several other states with similar or smaller populations such as Connecticut (7 FTE), Colorado (6 FTE), Nevada (5 FTE), and Washington (10 FTE).<sup>vii</sup> The additional funding in SF1426 would provide for two additional antitrust attorneys, a common-sense step forward in rebuilding this important team.

The base funding in both versions of HF1830 will also increase funding for the Wage Theft Unit, allowing them to hire three additional employees to strengthen and expand upon wage theft prevention and accountability efforts.

The State Government Omnibus Finance bill is an important part of addressing our highly concentrated economy and adopting the House position will ensure the greatest resources available for curbing monopoly power. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Minnesota Farmers Union  
Minnesota Nurses Association  
MAPE  
UFCW Local 1189  
The Awood Center  
SEIU Healthcare Minnesota & Iowa  
Main Street Alliance  
American Economic Liberties Project  
CURE  
Open Markets Institute  
Fight Corporate Monopolies

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<sup>i</sup> [bit.ly/bostonfedconcentration](https://bit.ly/bostonfedconcentration)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://economicsecurityproject.org/work/antimonopoly/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0634>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://t.co/jxwpszLB3j>

<sup>v</sup> <https://nfu.org/farmers-share/>

<sup>vi</sup> [https://fcm-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/MN\\_Polling\\_Results\\_FCM\\_x\\_PPP.pdf](https://fcm-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/MN_Polling_Results_FCM_x_PPP.pdf)

<sup>vii</sup> <https://som.yale.edu/centers/thurman-arnold-project-at-yale/modern-antitrust-enforcement>