



MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH
MINNESOTA JUDICIAL CENTER
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SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155

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Members of the Conference Committee on H.F. 5216,

On behalf of the judges and staff of the Minnesota Judicial Branch, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on H.F. 5216, the Judiciary and Public Safety Omnibus Bill.

We appreciate the commitment made by the House, the Senate, and the Governor to ensure that justice is accessible to all. This bill contains critical investments in our state's justice system. We believe a high-functioning and accessible court system is vital to ensuring that the benefits of those investments are fully realized by the people of Minnesota. We ask for your support in providing supplemental funding for the state's judiciary and support for our policy provisions that will create more efficient processes, allow for expanded services, and promote safety for court users.

Pay Increases for Examiners and Interpreters

The proposed funding in this bill would allow the Judicial Branch to increase payment rates for both contract court interpreters and the forensic examiners who provide mental health examinations in civil commitment and criminal proceedings. This funding will help the Judicial Branch continue to find qualified examiners and interpreters to deliver these vital services and uphold the Constitutional rights of Minnesotans.

The Minnesota Judicial Branch:

- Supports the House and Senate provisions that would provide funding to increase payment rates for certified court interpreters from \$65/hour to \$75/hour.
- Appreciates that both the House and Senate have included funding to provide pay increases for forensic examiners. **The Judicial Branch urges the Conference Committee to support the Senate position for forensic examiner pay increases**, which would increase examiner payment rates to \$138/hour, closer to the Judicial Branch's original request of an increase to \$225/hour.

Critical Funding for Mandated Services Deficits

The omnibus funding bill will provide temporary funding to address the rising costs and increasing deficits in the Judicial Branch's Psychological Services program, statewide Jury program, Court Interpreter program, and Cyber Security program. The Judicial Branch is grateful to both the House and Senate for providing temporary funding to address these long-term budget needs.

The Judicial Branch urges the Conference Committee to support the Senate position for funding the deficits in the Psychological Services program, statewide Jury program, Court Interpreter program, and Cyber Security program through FY2027. This short-term funding will allow the Judicial Branch to continue meeting the increased need for these services, while giving us time to seek full, permanent funding to address these deficits during the 2025 Legislative Session.

Courthouse Safety

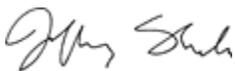
The Judicial Branch urges the Conference Committee to support the House position to provide one-time funding for the Safe and Secure Courthouse Initiative. If approved, the Judicial Branch will use this funding to provide one-time matching grants to help counties fund critical security and safety improvements in their local courthouses.

Judicial Branch Policy Priorities

The Judicial Branch supports the court operations policy provisions included in Article 6 of the Senate Policy bill and Article 3 of the House Policy bill. **The Judicial Branch also urges the Conference Committee to adopt the court notices provision in the House Policy bill (Article 3, sections 5, 9).** This provision would allow court-generated notices to be served by publication by posting to the Minnesota Judicial Branch website. This policy provision would ensure timely and broad access to court notices, while saving considerable money for taxpayers.

On behalf of the judges and staff of the Minnesota Judicial Branch, thank you for your continued support and partnership. We appreciate the hard work of the House and Senate Judiciary committees this session, and look forward to working with the Legislature in the year ahead to address the long-term funding challenges facing our courts.

With gratitude,



Jeffrey Shorba
State Court Administrator