



**Re: SF 3998 (Protections for Student Journalists)**

Dear Chair Cwodzinski and Members of the Education Policy Committee:

I write as executive director of the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the Minnesota News Media Institute to express our strong support for SF 3998. MNA represents more than 260 newspapers throughout the state, from the smallest to the largest. MNI, our 501(c)3, is focused on journalism education in high school, college and professional settings.

HF 4083 would extend important First Amendment protections to student journalists in Minnesota secondary schools. Currently, based on decisions of the United States Supreme Court, secondary school officials have very broad discretion to censor the work of student journalists. That censorship is often exercised, resulting in the loss of potentially useful and important information for the student body. The bill would place some reasonable limits on the scope of the discretion that is now given to school officials.

Students will learn how to operate as responsible journalists only if they are given some latitude in which to exercise responsibility. Under current law, that opportunity is very limited.

It bears emphasizing that SF 3998 does still provide school officials with the authority to limit or prevent the dissemination of material that is not protected by the First Amendment, or that could have adverse effects on the school environment (see section 1, subd. 3).

We therefore urge you to approve SF 3998. And thank you for considering our views.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lisa Hills". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lisa" and last name "Hills" clearly distinguishable.

**Lisa Hills**  
**Executive Director**  
**Minnesota Newspaper Association | Minnesota News Media Institute**