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RE: SF475 Whistleblower protections for public employees modification

Dear Senate State & Local Government Committee Members and SF475 Authors,

My name is Stephanie Chappell and request unpaid individuals serving under state and federal capacity also be added to SF475's definition of a public employee. An experience I had with the semi-state agency and 501c3 nonprofit organization Minnesota Historical Society while serving as a federal signatory approved by application under the National Park Service describes how SF475 would allow all volunteers protections when observing misuse of funds and abuse of people, places, and things.

My experience as a federal signatory was not reimbursed in any way. I was approved as a "Consulting Party" after initiating the application process through the National Park Service. I request the definition of "public employee" be expanded to include those who receive no reimbursement of any kind and utilize interest, time, skill, or knowledge for the protection of Minnesota residents or places identified with historical meaning in Minnesota State history under a state or federal program requiring individual interest or interest by a group of people not identified under a charity or nonprofit.

My service as a "Consulting Party" required observation, study, investigation, and research during which time I discovered wrongdoing on the part of semi-state agency and 501c3 nonprofit Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS). I escalated the behavior to a conference with the National Park Service who determined the behavior was a violation and determined MNHS needed to alert those involved of the violation in writing. Correction was impossible as MNHS claimed the artifacts discovered had been thrown in an undocumented garbage and could not be located.

As a result of my report, MNHS threatened me to stay off the construction site limiting my observation abilities, trespassed me from the site, excluded me from construction updates, and removed me from "Consulting Party" acknowledgements.

Please adjust the definition of "public employee" to include those performing duties that are related to mandated, scheduled, or required voluntary in an unpaid, unreimbursed, or funding of any kind positions under existing state or federal requirements.

Thank you for adding additional language to protect unpaid volunteers providing services in State or Federal programs and contracts in the definition of "public employee" in 181.931 that further protects participants in State and Federal reviews and contracts in 181.932.

Sincerely,  
Stephanie Chappell  
District 17 Gruenhagen