



# Association of Minnesota Counties

March 17, 2025

**Re: SF 2039**

Dear Chair Latz, Lead Limmer, and Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee Members:

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), on behalf of Minnesota's 87 counties, **writes to provide feedback and general policy considerations regarding SF 2039.**

AMC, along with other stakeholders such as the Minnesota County Recorders Association (MCRA) and Minnesota Association of County Officers (MACO), has engaged earnestly in a working group for SF 2039 throughout the last year. While the proposal to use public resources to redact and remove public information for certain public officials is not an AMC platform, we have nonetheless engaged with judicial officials to meet their concerns regarding personal and family safety. We have also conveyed that this must be balanced with counties' ability to do their work in a timely, efficient, and reasonable manner in the context of current workforce shortages and potential negative impacts on other county services. **We are grateful for the several provisions in SF 2309 and amendment that reflect this collaborative process, but believe more work needs to be done to ensure all stakeholder agreement. We respectfully offer the following considerations along with a request to continue working throughout session to ensure agreement:**

As members can imagine, tracking down and masking all real property records for judicial officials, their staff, and their family members is a sizable task and will represent new and considerable staffing responsibilities for counties. This bill identifies no new resources for counties to assume this work; and as such, counties will be requesting their lands records, property tax departments, and recorders to add this work to their workloads. The inclusion of judicial staff, not just judges and their families, dramatically increases the amount of records and, therefore, the liability for any mistakes. As this bill moves forward, we hope to work with stakeholders to continue refining the scope of data redaction being sought.

Yet another concern is related to the bill's liability standards for counties taking on this work. Only certain staff at counties would be assigned to access this information since it's stored across many systems—property tax payments, permit applications, division of lots, and so forth. We would be relying on very few people to complete the work and if it is not completed fully and accurately, counties would be liable for violations of this new law. This is a problem for all counties, but particularly small counties that have only one or two employees that are able to work on any requests that come in. Additionally, some of this information, including a home address, can be acquired from sources other than government records.

A third consideration is precedent setting and the difference in treatment between certain public servants. While this bill is limited to judge and judicial staff data, it is not inconceivable that other public employee groups with similarly difficult public interactions (child protection workers, correctional employees, election officers, etc.) could come forward in future years to ask for similar protections. **That is why it is so important that stakeholders find an agreed upon process that balances safety concerns with reasonable workforce limitations and resources.**

We appreciate your considerations of these concerns and hope to continue engaging collaboratively with stakeholders as the session continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan Zacharias". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "N" and "Z".

Nathan Zacharias, Technology Policy Analyst  
*Association of Minnesota Counties*