April 27, 2026

The Honorable Matt Klein
Chair, Senate Commerce Committee
95 University Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55155

Opposition to SF 4696

Dear Chairman Klein and Members of the committee,

I am writing to you today as a DFL activist, a member of the DFL African American Caucus, and a dedicated advocate for the LGBTQ+ community to voice my strong opposition to SF 4696. While I recognize the intent to protect children from predatory algorithms, the current framework of this bill resembles early versions of the federal Kids Online Safety Act legislation that faced overwhelming backlash from civil rights and LGBTQ+ organizations for its potential to facilitate state-sanctioned censorship.

As an advocate, I have seen how safety legislation is frequently weaponized against minority groups. By granting the state and private parties the power to litigate against profile-based feeds and harmful content, this bill creates a path for organizations like the Alliance Defending Freedom to categorize LGBTQ+ existence as harmful. For a Black queer or trans youth in a hostile environment, a personalized feed is often their only lifeline to community and mental health support. Under SF 4696, these types of spaces are at risk of being erased.

Furthermore, the bill’s reliance on app-by-app age verification and frequent "age estimation" checks creates significant privacy and equity barriers. These requirements disproportionately impact families in vulnerable communities and strip away the anonymity that marginalized youth rely on for their physical and emotional safety. Rather than a fragmented, data-heavy approach that invites surveillance, we should look toward centralized, privacy-preserving tools that empower parents without compromising the digital rights of our most at-risk citizens.

I urge the committee to protect safe spaces and the privacy of all Minnesotans by voting NO on SF 4696.

Respectfully,

Curtis Shelmon
Minneapolis, MN
DFL African American Caucus, LGBTQ+ advocate