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May 22, 2024

The Honorable Tim Walz  
Governor, State of Minnesota  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz,

We write to urge you to veto HF5247, the 1432-page conference committee report that was jammed through the legislature in mere minutes on Sunday evening in violation of House rules, Senate rules, Joint Rules of the Legislature, and the Constitution of the State of Minnesota.

Article 4 Section 17 of the Minnesota Constitution states that “No law shall embrace more than one subject, which shall be expressed in its title.” The title for HF5247 alone is six full pages, including dozens of individual subjects expressed in the title. It is inconsistent with the oath you swore to uphold the Minnesota Constitution to sign this bill into law.

Furthermore, signing this bill would signal to Minnesotans that you explicitly endorse the outrageous and unprecedented breach of process that put the bill on your desk.

On Sunday evening, the bill was assembled in the HF5247 Conference Committee with fewer than three hours remaining in the session. In her motion, the Chair of the Committee reported incorrect bill numbers when listing the bills that were set to be adopted, causing further confusion for anyone attempting to track the contents of the bill. While the Revisor of Statutes website indicates that the conference committee report was posted at 10:49PM, legislators and the public were unable to access the report itself online until hours later, and legislators were unable to obtain a copy of the bill itself prior to the vote.

Despite this stunning lack of transparency, the bill was brought immediately to the House floor, and pushed to a vote despite dozens of objections and privileged motions ignored by the Speaker of the House. The Senate followed suit soon after.

Joint Rules are quite clear that conference committee reports “must be limited to provisions that are germane to the bill and amendments that were referred to the Conference Committee. A provision is not germane if it relates to a substantially different subject or is intended to accomplish a substantially

different purpose from that of the bill.” This bill plainly violated Joint Rules, as well as the rules in each respective chamber.

Governor, your party has had two years of single-party control, and utilized every one of the 120 legislative days permitted in our Constitution. The claim that the minority parties in the House and Senate somehow obstructed the work of the majority, to the point that such drastic action was required, is simply untrue.

Over the course of the final weeks of session, numerous bills were passed with minimal debate – some in as few as three or four minutes. The amount of time spent debating more controversial bills over the past two weeks was neither unprecedented nor unwarranted. Both chambers spent appropriate time scrutinizing bills that contained hundreds of millions of dollars in tax increases, brand new language added in conference committees, and provisions that had never been debated in one or both chambers.

Additionally, both the House and Senate Majorities contributed to the time crunch thanks to their mismanagement of the floor schedule. On Saturday, May 18 the Senate spent more than 13 hours in recess while the House continued to debate and pass bills. The House opted to spend substantial time on debates for the ERA Constitutional Amendment and Ranked Choice Voting – bills that ultimately were not even brought up in the Senate.

Sadly, it seems that Democrat leadership has decided that this flagrant abuse of the legislative process and utter contempt for Republican legislators who collectively represent millions of Minnesotans is acceptable in the pursuit of partisan priorities. We hope that is not the case for you. You still have a chance to demonstrate that in Minnesota we are better than this, and that you still believe in the “One Minnesota” spirit upon which you campaigned.

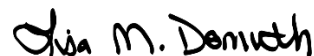
Signing this bill will be an endorsement of a process that will have serious consequences for both chambers for years to come. Creating a legislative environment where rules, transparency, and process are second to the whims of partisanship is unhealthy for our state and for the legislature as an institution.

We urge you to do what is right – not just what is politically expedient for you and your party – and veto HF5247.

Sincerely



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Minority Leader  
Minnesota Senate



Lisa M. Demuth  
Minority Leader  
Minnesota House of Representatives