

March 22, 2020

The Honorable Melissa Hortman
Speaker of the House
463 State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

The Honorable Paul Gazelka
Senate Majority Leader
Room 3113
95 University Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

The Honorable Kurt Daudt
House Minority Leader
267 State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

The Honorable Susan Kent
Senate Minority Leader
Room 2227
95 University Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

RE: Supreme Court Legislative Request regarding COVID-19

Speaker Hortman, Majority Leader Gazelka, Leader Daudt and Leader Kent:

Thank you for all that you are doing to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. This is an unprecedented time in our State and Nation and your continued cooperative approach to crisis management is welcomed.

The Minnesota Association for Justice (MAJ) has received the correspondence from Chief Justice Gildea seeking legislative approval for relief from certain court related statutory requirements as we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been asked to review and comment to you on this request and its impact on the thousands of Minnesotans that rely on Minnesota's court system daily.

We endorse the items currently identified in the Court's request as well as their efforts to keep Minnesotans and Court personal safe as we practice social distancing and remotely working to completely our responsibilities for our clients. We note with approval that the Court is providing for specific judicial discretion to address urgent matters including safety protections for victims of crime; orders for protection; harassment restraining orders and proper bail proceedings providing conditions on release.

It is likely that additional concerns will arise as we cautiously move forward, and we stand ready to work with you and the Court's as those issues are identified. Protecting our rights and the rule of law are foundational mandates during this crisis and we applaud everyone's commitment to maintaining these core functions of our government.

Please contact our organization at any time if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael Hall, III
Michael Hall, III; MAJ, President

cc: Governor Tim Walz
Chief Justice Lorie Gildea
Rep. John Lesch
Senator Warren Limmer