



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Walz

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155-1611

July 29, 2019

Senator Paul Gazelka
Majority Leader
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3113
95 University Avenue W.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Majority Leader Gazelka:

I frequently hear from Minnesotans who are proud that we passed a budget in one of the few divided state governments in the country. They appreciate that we found a way to work together and reach a deal, on time, that invests in education, health care, and community prosperity. I am hopeful that the foundation of trust and compromise we built this year will be the basis of how we work together moving forward.

It is in that spirit that I reached out to you last week to discuss your recently launched website soliciting complaints from state employees. While I welcome legislative oversight, I am concerned that you chose to house this initiative within the Senate Republican Caucus. This represents a departure from neutral investigatory principles, and leads me—and Minnesotans—to believe this system is politically motivated.

My concern is heightened by issues regarding the data practices act, governance, transparency, and compliance that are outlined in the attached letter from Management and Budget Commissioner Frans to Legislative Auditor Nobles. It is my hope that you and your staff will work with Commissioner Frans and Legislative Auditor Nobles to address these questions and reassure Minnesotans that your website will not stand in the way the Legislative Auditor's ability—and the Executive Branch's ability—to pursue and address allegations of fraud and abuse.

Until you have consulted with Commissioner Frans and Legislative Auditor Nobles and satisfied them that your initiative does not expose state employees to unnecessary risk and hinder our shared goal for efficient and effective government, I recommend that you suspend the website. Good governance is a bipartisan issue, and I am sure the Senate Republican Caucus wants to avoid any unintended consequences like confusing whistleblowers or impeding investigations by the Office of the Legislative Auditor.

Transparency is also bipartisan issue. That's why I am grateful for your willingness to have an additional discussion about passing legislation next session subjecting the State Legislature to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA). As Commissioner Frans identifies in his letter, it is problematic that your website touts that the data collected is not

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subject to MGDPA. As you know, the data practices act provides protections for employees and provides access to information that is necessary for good government to function.

I look forward to our next opportunity to connect about a legislative initiative to expand the MGDPA beyond the Executive Branch to include the Legislative Branch in the near future. In the meantime, please let me know your intention regarding taking down the Senate Republican Caucus website until Minnesotans have been assured it's not politically motivated and the problems of transparency and governance are addressed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. J. Walz', written in a cursive style.

Tim Walz
Governor