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Chair Miller, Vice Chair Claggett, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the House Technology and Innovation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 507.

House Bill 507 seeks to extend eligibility for affirmative defenses against data breach claims to political subdivisions. Political subdivisions face unique challenges when it comes to cybersecurity because they often handle a significant amount of personal data due to the number nature of the services they provide. Under current law, “covered entities”, such as businesses, that implement and adhere to reasonable cybersecurity controls are already eligible for such affirmative defenses.

To be covered, businesses and other entities must implement a written cybersecurity program that includes specific safeguards to protect personal and restricted information, aligning with best practices in the industry. This bill proposes to include political subdivisions under the definition of “covered entities.” Further, political subdivision is defined to encompass municipal corporations, townships, counties, park districts, conservancy districts, sanitary districts, sewer districts, special water district, and other governmental bodies operating within a geographic area smaller than that of the state.

This legislation is important in several ways. House Bill 507 incentivizes local governments to adopt comprehensive cybersecurity protocols, thus mitigating the risk of data breaches. By ensuring robust cybersecurity measures, we are enhancing public trust. Our constituents can be confident that their personal information is being safeguarded by their government.

House Bill 507 is a significant step towards fortifying our state’s cybersecurity framework. We are not only enhancing protection of sensitive information, but also promoting a culture of sound practices across all levels of government.

I urge the committee to support the passage of this bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony. I am happy to answer any questions.