

Matt Ehling: Summary CV

For three decades, Matt Ehling has been involved in multiple aspects of journalism and media production, as well as non-partisan public advocacy around civil liberties and government accountability issues.

Government Accountability Work

In 2009, Ehling founded the non-profit organization Public Record Media (PRM), which uses public records laws to request government documents, and publishes them on-line for the benefit of the press, policy makers, and the public. PRM engages in litigation involving freedom of information laws — through which it has secured the release of tens of thousands of pages of government documents — and is a frequent amicus party in legal cases involving open records statutes. For over a decade, Ehling has served as the point-person for PRM’s legal affairs, collaborating with attorneys on strategy, research, and drafting. He is currently a PRM board member.

PRM has filed multiple Freedom of Information Act lawsuits against federal agencies, including Health and Human Services, the Department of the Interior, and the U.S. Justice Department (DOJ), resulting in settlements for documents and legal fees. In 2013, PRM prevailed over the Obama-era DOJ in a motion for fees and costs in a dispute over access to memoranda on the domestic use of drones. In 2020, a lawsuit filed against the Trump-era DOJ resulted in the disclosure of documents related to proposed amendments to the Espionage Act, and legal tools for investigating leaks to journalists. Litigation by PRM also led to the State of Minnesota’s release of its bid to attract Amazon’s second corporate headquarters — a document the state government declined to provide to the taxpaying public.

Matt Ehling serves on the board of the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information (MNCOGI), and chairs its legislative issues committee. Since 2013, he has testified before the Minnesota Legislature dozens of times, and has been responsible for extensive statutory updates to Minnesota’s open records law - the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

On behalf of MNCOGI, Ehling was involved in negotiating the final form of

Minnesota's Automated License Plate Reader statute (Minn. Stat. § 13.824); participated in the two-year negotiation of the state's body camera regulations (Minn. Stat. § 13.825); helped add language to Chapter 13 to ensure that the existence of government surveillance technology was classified as public data (Minn. Stat. § 13.82 subd. 31); helped draft updates to the remote technology sections of Minnesota's Open Meeting Law (Chapter 13D); and participated in the drafting or amendment of scores of other bills.

Most recently, Ehling founded The Forum For Constitutional Rights (FCR) — a project that files amicus briefs in significant constitutional law cases. FCR has filed briefs before the Minnesota Court of Appeals, the Minnesota Supreme Court, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court. Cases have included *Federal Bureau of Investigation v. Yonas Fikre* (U.S. 2024), *Drake Snell v. Tim Walz I* (Minn. 2023), and *State v. Schaffer* (Minn. 2024).

Media Production and Journalism Work

Ehling has worked in television production - in both technical and creative capacities - for regional and national PBS productions. In addition, he has produced numerous independent documentary programs that have aired on regional public radio stations, as well as on national cable networks, including the Independent Film Channel and The Bravo Channel. His PBS-broadcast documentaries include "Security and the Constitution" and "Intent: Finding Meaning In the Constitution." He has been part of several Upper Midwest Regional Emmy-award winning production teams, including for the television documentaries "Minnesota: A History of the Land" and "Troubled Waters: A Mississippi River Story." For nearly three decades, he has managed a series of businesses that provide media production, communications, and related services.

As a cinematographer and videographer, his work has been seen at the Sundance Film Festival, the SXSW Film Festival, and on the PBS flagship series "American Masters." He has experience with both domestic and international documentary production, and has filmed in Canada, Cuba, the Virgin Islands, and throughout the United States. Ehling has extensive experience filming in challenging conditions — ranging from mountaineering, to filming at sea, to documenting political protests and civil unrest. He filmed during the 2000 and 2004 national political

conventions; during the one-year WTO anniversary protests (2000), and in the midst of the party split that occurred during the 2000 Reform Party national convention. In the course of his documentary work, he shadowed the homicide unit of a major metropolitan police department; visited the “Body Farm” forensic research facility; and has interviewed individuals including Iran-Contra whistleblower Gene Wheaton, Village Voice writer Nat Hentoff, former CIA director Stansfield Turner, and former FBI agent Coleen Rowley.

Ehling is a former news writer for the on-line news magazine Minnpost.com, where he wrote about burial rights for Hmong “Secret War” veterans, use of the Neutrality Act, civil gang injunctions, and contingency plans for Minnesota’s legal system. For over a decade, he also contributed op-ed pieces on topics ranging from the Espionage Act, to Second Amendment rights, to the hazards posed by complex technological systems.

Speaking and Teaching

Matt Ehling has been a public speaker on a wide variety of topics, including at the National Association for the Advancement of Science, and through the Hennepin County Bar Association. As a guest lecturer, he has spoken at the University of Minnesota School of Journalism, the University of Minnesota Law School, the University of Saint Thomas, and the University of Wisconsin River Falls, among other institutions. He has served as adjunct faculty at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, the University of Minnesota Duluth, and the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. Ehling is a graduate of Metropolitan State University.