



April 3, 2024

Chair & Representative Ginny Klevorn
House State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee
c/o Amanda Rudolph, Committee Administrator
Room 10, Minnesota State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: Testimony for HF4598 - Chief Author Rep. Long

Dear Chair Klevorn and Members of the House State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee,

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public. Together, we envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate, and where their **government is representative, accountable and responsive** to the community's interests.

At the heart of our defense of democracy is our **commitment to redistricting processes and enforceable standards that promote fair and effective representation at all levels of government with maximum opportunity for transparency and public participation.** Many of the changes that have been advanced by the legislature to improve and expand access to the ballot are ineffective if representative maps are manipulated to achieve a predetermined outcome. To that end, we have been actively involved in support of full census counts and people-powered fair maps for all Minnesotans for decades, and most recently, through our active participation in the Minnesota Census Mobilization Partnership, Our Maps Minnesota campaign, and the Minnesota Census and Democracy Partnership - all convened by the Minnesota Council on Foundations.

We are aware that HF 4598 is being considered concurrently with HF 4593 which also proposes creation of an independent redistricting commission. HF 4598 moves two additional "good government" reforms alongside redistricting, under a single constitutional amendment. The League of Women Voters remains neutral at this time with regard to the additional reforms being proposed along with redistricting, as we've not had ample time to

study these issues. These additional measures relate to legislatures and legislative sessions, very different topics with significantly different impacts than the proposal to establish an independent redistricting commission to benefit voters through more representative maps. **We strongly encourage legislators to prioritize a standalone redistricting bill that enhances transparency and accountability for Minnesota voters as they consider the proposed changes.**

With respect to the redistricting provisions in HF 4598, we feel while there are many redistricting best practices reflected in this bill, there are also some significant omissions that result in the bill not taking full advantage of the 5 years of community and stakeholder input that are reflected in HF4593 that ensure the bill is the best it can be for the people and impacted communities that are unique to Minnesota. **We strongly encourage the bill authors to consider the robust language included in HF4593 such as measures to assure diverse commission representation, and provide for outreach and inclusion of minority and impacted communities that ensure they are included and reflected in congressional and legislative maps.**

We are hopeful that continued discussion can lead to creation of a single bill, reflecting best practices, as well as lessons learned, from successful redistricting efforts across the country, from unsuccessful efforts, that can be supported by all stakeholders while also meeting the interests of Minnesota voters in having congressional and legislative maps that provide for representative and responsive government where all voices, especially those of impacted or marginalized communities, are heard and supported.

We thank all the bill authors for their leadership on this important issue to ensure people-powered fair maps here in Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Michelle Witte
Executive Director
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Paul Huffman
Election and Redistricting Policy Coordinator
League of Women Voters of Minnesota
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Re: Testimony for HF4593 - Chief Author Rep. Klevorn

Dear Chair Klevorn and Members of the House State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee,

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public. Together, we envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate, and where their **government is representative, accountable and responsive** to the community's interests.

At the heart of our defense of democracy is our **commitment to redistricting processes and enforceable standards that promote fair and effective representation at all levels of government with maximum opportunity for transparency and public participation**. Many of the changes that have been advanced by the legislature to improve and expand access to the ballot are ineffective if representative maps are manipulated to achieve a predetermined outcome. To that end, we have been actively involved in support of full census counts and people-powered fair maps for all Minnesotans for decades, and most recently, through our active participation in the Minnesota Census Mobilization Partnership, Our Maps Minnesota campaign, and the Minnesota Census and Democracy Partnership - all convened by the Minnesota Council on Foundations.

Working in active collaboration with community partners who are among those most impacted by maps that do not reflect the interests and needs of voters and communities, we have worked together with HF4593 bill authors to craft the ***With Us, For Us Redistricting Amendment* bill**, a standalone, people-centered, grassroots redistricting reform bill moving an independent redistricting commission that reflects the inputs and concerns of impacted communities. This bill also reflects best practices from the four states which currently have independent commissions and includes provisions to address the lessons learned nationally from the most recent redistricting cycle. **We feel that this bill best addresses interests and concerns of Minnesotans with respect to commission selection and composition, redistricting principles, and the provisions for public outreach and involvement, especially to minority and impacted communities frequently not present in these discussions**. Most importantly, this bill reflects the concerns and input voiced by community groups representing those communities most affected by redistricting and representing a growing part of our state's electorate, in order to ensure diverse community representation. **We therefore stand in full support for HF 4593 and urge your support.**

LWV Minnesota is aware that HF 4598 is also under consideration to advance redistricting reform. We are hopeful that continued discussion can lead to a single bill that can be supported by all stakeholders while also supporting the interests of Minnesota voters in having congressional and legislative maps that provide for representative and responsive government where all voices, especially those of impacted or marginalized communities, are heard and supported.

We thank all the bill authors for their leadership on this important issue to ensure people-powered fair maps here in Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Michelle Witte
Executive Director
League of Women Voters of Minnesota
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Paul Huffman
Election and Redistricting Policy Coordinator
League of Women Voters of Minnesota
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Re: Support for the Equal Access Broadband Bill - HF4182

Dear Rep. Klevorn and members of the Committee,

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public. With our statewide membership of more than 2,100 members representing 35 local Leagues in 45 counties, we envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota strongly supports HF4182 - the Equal Access to Broadband Act - because of the importance of local community media to our mission.

Many of our local Leagues rely on community stations for their nonpartisan candidate forums and informational programs from Duluth to Winona to New Ulm. In the West Metro, CCX Media has been essential for publicity and dissemination of many local League programs in addition to televising local government meetings. In 2023, the recordings of 67 forums reached 40,000 views alone. For the 2024 election, local Leagues are expected to produce over 300 forums.

Moreover, providers across the state provide communities with a vital source of information on local democracy that is accessible, trusted and nonpartisan. The League of Women Voters believes that access to public affairs programming through modern media communication is essential to the public interest and to protect civil liberties, ensure open and transparent government, and promote the public's right to know.

Please pass HF4182 to ensure that communities around the state can continue to rely on local media as a trusted source of information in our democracy.

Sincerely,



Sam Streukens, Civic Engagement Director
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