

Committee Administrator Peter Strohmeier:

Please share the following letter of testimony with members of the Local Government Division for the Hearing on HF 89 on Wednesday, March 17 at 8:30am:

Dear Chair Sandra Masin and members of the Local Government Division,

The negativity and polarization of our politics has been growing worse and reached a boiling point on January 6th when the very seat of American democracy was attacked. It is not the time to stand idly by and hope for the best; it is a time to take concrete action to counteract the polarization that is threatening our political system. The good news is that you have an opportunity to pass a reform that is perfectly tailored to meet this moment, and that reform is Ranked Choice Voting (RCV).

RCV mitigates polarization by requiring candidates to build broad majority coalitions and earn second and third choice votes. Successful RCV candidates try to reach as many voters as possible and are disincentivized to attack their opponents as they don't want to alienate their opponents' base voters - from whom they could earn a second choice vote. RCV encourages candidates to be more civil and refrain from specious attacks. This reform is exactly what we need and what voters across Minnesota are demanding.

The very basis of our democracy is majority rule, and RCV helps ensure majority winners. In 2020, we had several critical races in Minnesota where third party candidates ran, and a winner was decided with less than a majority -- often known as the spoiler effect. Our elections should not be decided by happenstance -- or who just happens to be first past the post. Our elections should be decided by whomever has earned the most support - not by the spoiler effect and not by parties using it to tactical advantage. RCV eliminates the spoiler effect and ensures majority winners. While we saw this spoiler effect in 2020, we will likely see even more of it in 2022, and the legislature should take action now to prevent it.

I urge you to support RCV for state and federal races in Minnesota and to vote YES on HF 89.

Thank you,

Erin Zamoff
Edina, MN