



March 16, 2023

Dear Chair Freiberg and Members of the Elections Committee,

On behalf of the League of Minnesota Cities and Association of Minnesota Counties, we write to provide feedback on HF 2486. As this committee is aware, both of our organizations have long standing positions supporting a local option to implement ranked choice voting (RCV) in their communities based on decisions made by elected leaders representing local needs and interests. We are appreciative of the delete-everything amendment to change a mandated implementation of a statewide RCV model to a task force and the inclusion of a “local option” to implement RCV. We are also glad that this amendment adds additional election administrators to the task force and adds to the report requirements an assessment of the feasibility of adopting statewide ranked choice voting and the impact on local election administration and voter experience.

While we appreciate other states like Maine and Alaska have implemented ranked choice voting, it should be reiterated that Minnesota’s elections system vastly differs from those examples as our elections are administered *locally*, not by the State. As such, we believe it is critical to address outstanding questions surrounding the administration and implementation of a local option. These questions include:

- Logistical feasibility of even year election cycles, particularly how ranked choice voting would work in conjunction with non-ranked choice voting elections. For example, would voters receive multiple ballots for non-RCV statewide elections and local elections using RCV?
- Potential impacts to election equipment purchases and ongoing maintenance. Article 3, Section 9 seems to limit a local jurisdiction’s ability to purchase—or potentially update—election equipment that has not been certified to be RCV-friendly by the Secretary of State despite the fact these local jurisdictions may not be opting into an RCV model.
- Questions of whether a county must conduct a RCV option for a municipality who does not administer their own election but has voted to use RCV for their local races.

These issues underscore the importance of the task force’s duties to make sure that elections administrators know the details, understand the resources this system would require, and have ample time to prepare elections systems and educate the public on such a fundamental shift in elections administration. We hope to continue working with the bill author and other stakeholders to determine how to address these outstanding questions to be able to successfully provide this option to all local governments, a position we have long supported.

Sincerely,

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