

Thank you Madame Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Sahro Abdullahi and I live in Savage, Minnesota. I'm a mother of 5 and I am a cultural liaison for the Somali community in the isd191 school district. For the last 3 years, I've been involved in helping families get out to vote by providing transportation and translation services.

I've heard so many members of my community express their anxiety about voting for the first time. It is an intimidating process and a huge step, especially if you have limited english-language knowledge and no one there to help translate, which we ran into a lot. I spoke with a few women who said they showed up to vote, looked at their ballot and didn't understand what they were supposed to do. One of them is not a shy or nervous person, but when it came to filling out her ballot, she told me she was shaking and sweating and wasn't able to complete it.

The lack of language resources leaves people feeling like no one cares about them and disincentivizes them to vote. We had to work so hard to convince people that their voice matters — that it's their right as an American Citizen, even if they don't have expert knowledge of the language. Yet when we showed up to polling locations, the resources were not available to guide them through the process.

Instead, we helped them. They were so grateful when we explained the process to them — so many people who finally felt like they had a say in the decisions that impact their daily life.

However, we as community members and volunteers can't be everywhere at once. We need to have language resources available to help our voters feel confident and proud of casting their ballot. Voting should be a comfortable and welcoming experience for everyone. I support this bill and its effort to do that.

Thank you.  
Sahro Abdullahi