

Clean Elections Minnesota

May 1 , 2023

Re: 1830/SF 1426 State and Local Government, and Elections Finance Omnibus Bill, Elections and Campaign Finance Articles

Testimony

Madame Chairs Representative Klevorn, Senator Murphy and Members of the Conference Committee:

Clean Elections Minnesota is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization seeking a healthy and inclusive democracy for our state. The proposed changes to state law in both the House and the Senate elections bills make great strides in achieving that goal. We are testifying to reinforce our support for many of the provisions with same and similar language. We are also writing to ask for the Conference Committee to adopt the House language on additional polling locations requested by Tribes and the Senate language for the Secretary of State Voting Task Force, appropriations to support it and to restore the local options provision for Ranked Choice Voting that was included in Senator Morrison and Representative Frazier's original RCV bill.

We ask the Committee to adopt the House language in Elections Administration Section 31 lines 92.32-93.2 *"At the request of a federally recognized Indian Tribe with a reservation in the county the county auditor must establish an additional polling place for at least one day on the Indian reservation on a site agreed upon by the tribe."* For too long Tribes have been restricted from easy access to the polls; this will help to provide more access.

We ask the Committee to adopt the Senate language in Elections Policy Lines 132.13-135.3 that establishes the Secretary of State Voting Task Force that includes Ranked Choice Voting and in Article 2 lines 24.6-24.10 in Elections Appropriations for \$244,000 in FY24 and \$245,000 in FY25 to the Legislative Coordinating Committee to support the Task Force. We believe RCV makes our democracy more equitable, and that the option should be explored.

We also ask for the Committee to restore the Ranked Choice Voting local options provision that was included in Senator Morrison and Representative Frasier's original bills for cities and school districts that hold elections in odd-numbered years. Currently, only 15% of our cities can set their own rules for their local elections. The remaining 85% must ask the Minnesota Legislature for permission. Metro Cities like Minneapolis, St. Paul, Bloomington, St. Louis Park, and Minnetonka, have adopted RCV. Greater Minnesota cities should be able to do the same. We believe we need to remove existing regulatory barriers and extend the authority to local statutory jurisdictions so they can adopt RCV. We believe it's more efficient and more democratic. We hope this is included when the conference committee makes its report.

We support all of the same and similar language in Articles 6 and Article 1 in Campaign Finance and Policy on electioneering, more disclosure for lobbyists, and closing loopholes on contributions made during the legislative session.

In Articles 5 Election Administration and Article 7 Elections Policy Article, we support the same and similar language provisions that make it easier for students to vote; early voting, provisions that direct the state canvassing board to award all electoral votes to the presidential ticket that wins the overall popular vote if the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact is adopted by a majority of states whose electoral votes comprise a majority in the Electoral College. We support penalties for intimidating election officials. We also support allowing the dismissal of election officials for malfeasance; Minnesotans deserve well run elections. The provision allowing legitimate challenges to an individual's right to vote is important to reducing any mistrust in our elections.

Thanks to each of you for the great work you have done this session to advance democracy. We thank you for the great legislation that is included in the bill and ask for your support of our recommendations.

Sincerely,

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