

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear Chair Kiffmeyer and Members of the Minnesota Senate,

No matter our race, background, zip code, or how we pray, in order for our democracy to work, it must include all of us. Minnesotans across the state have committed to this - time and time again.

**Minnesotans are voters.** We are proud of our status as the highest voter turnout state in the nation and our honest, accurate, and secure elections. But we also know there's more we can do to bring our elections into the 21st century and ensure *all* Minnesotans can cast their ballots safely.

Our voting system is in urgent need of improvements. We ought to enact a statewide system of automatic voter registration, restore the voting rights of those who've served their time, and ban voter interference, intimidation, or deception. **We need reforms that make our system of voting more inclusive and accessible for everyone to use.**

Unfortunately, the Senate State Government omnibus bill, **Senate File 1831, 2nd Engrossment, would create more barriers to voting for all Minnesotans**, but especially for Black and Indigenous voters, voters of color, low-income voters, senior voters, and students.

Minnesota's same day registration system has served us well for years. However, the changes being proposed in **Senate File 1831 would end same day registration as we know it.** It does this by creating a new legal category of second-class ballots: provisional ballots (*93.4-93.9, 114.27-120.2*). The proposal scraps our current system which allows same-day registration with proof of address. It replaces it with a system that segregates provisional ballots before separately processing, adjudicating, and then counting (or not counting) them depending on their adjudication. The eligibility of same day registrants would need to be verified within a week after the election in order for their provisional votes to be counted.

This provisional balloting system would also be used when voters are challenged (*116.29-119.21*) A challenged status does not necessarily indicate a voter is ineligible. In fact, it's common for someone to have a challenged status, while still being eligible to vote. **The proposed change increases the likelihood that voters will be disenfranchised due to challenged ballots resulting from purely administrative issues** like having their mail temporarily forwarded or having a name similar to another voter.

Additionally, Senate File 1831 requires that on the eighth day after an election the names of all voters who cast provisional or challenged ballots, as well as the outcome of their adjudication, must be made publicly available (*119.24-120.2*). **Building a list of Minnesotans who were required to use second-class balloting will create stigma, encourage doubts, and intimidate voters.**

**The new system of second-class voting proposed in SF 1831 is complicated, intimidating, expensive, and unnecessary.** It will discourage voting, disproportionately harm Black and Indigenous voters, voters of color, low-income voters, senior voters, and students, and it will erode trust in our nation-leading election system.

Finally, Senate File 1831 would also require county auditors and municipal clerks to provide the Secretary of State with a list of each election judge that served with their names, addresses, party affiliation, and the source of their recruitment. The Secretary of State is then required to share those lists of judges with their respective major parties, which are then permitted to use it for “purposes related to elections or political activity”. **Permitting major parties to use lists of election judges for ‘political activity’ will needlessly politicize the ‘good government’ role that many election judges play.** This risk will likely discourage some election judges from volunteering their time.

**Please vote to remove these provisions from the omnibus bill or, failing that, vote ‘no’ on Senate File 1831.**

Thank you for your work on these critical issues. It’s not too late to make our voting system more inclusive, representative, and accessible.

Signed,

**100% Campaign**

**Asian American Organizing Project (AAOP)**

**CD2action**

**Citizens For Clean Elections**

**Clean Elections Minnesota**

**Clean Water Action**

**Climate Generation: A Will Steger Legacy**

**Hopkins Legislative Action Coalition**

**Common Cause MN**

**COPAL MN**

**Education Minnesota**

**Friends of the Boundary Waters Action Network**

**Indivisible Saint Paul**

**Indivisible Plymouth area**

**ISAIAH**

**Land Stewardship Action Fund**

**Land Stewardship Project**

**League of Women Voters of Minnesota**

**League of Women Voters Wayzata Plymouth**

**Let People Vote ACLU People Power**

**Minnesota Council of Nonprofits**

**Minnesota Let People Vote Coalition**

**Northern Lights.mn**

**OFA Saint Paul**

**Our Stories. Our Health.**

**SEIU MN State Council**

**TakeAction Minnesota**

**Valley Allies**