

Testimony relating to HF 69

February 17, 2025

Submitted by Rob Machalek to the Elections Finance and Government Operations Committee

Dear Chair Quam and members of the committee,

I have been a longtime resident of St. Louis Park and engaged in the community on several issues, including advocating for the adoption of ranked choice voting for our local elections. I urge you to oppose HF 69, which would require all local elections to be held in even years. This bill undermines local control, interferes with home rule authority, and creates practical and legal challenges for cities like mine that have adopted ranked choice voting (RCV).

Local communities are best positioned to determine their election schedules based on their needs. St. Louis Park has chosen to hold odd-year elections to allow our local races to remain the focus, free from the partisanship conversations in state and federal elections. This allows for more meaningful engagement with local candidates and issues that directly impact our daily lives.

In addition, HF 69 presents a serious conflict with ranked choice voting, which has been democratically adopted in multiple Minnesota cities. There are currently no statewide statutory guidelines for running RCV elections alongside state and federal general elections. Shifting RCV cities to even-year elections without addressing this gap would cause administrative confusion.

Cities like St. Louis Park that have adopted RCV have done so through local democratic processes to improve elections and increase voter choice. This bill disregards those local decisions and would force a disruptive change without a clear plan for how RCV would function in even-year elections. Any discussion about election timing must include input from the communities directly affected and must address the statutory changes necessary to implement RCV in even years.

I urge you to reject HF 69 and respect the right of Minnesota's cities to set their own election schedules. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rob Machalek
St. Louis Park