

Chair Nelson, members –

Clean Elections Minnesota is a nonpartisan nonprofit that supports fair elections in our state. We support H. F. 3666, offered by Rep. Emma Greenman, that prohibits intimidation of and interference with election officials.

The bill applies to canvassing boards, county auditors, municipal clerks, absentee ballot board members and election judges.

It has become increasingly common for election officials to be faced with intimidation to the extent that fewer people are willing to participate in our elections in that capacity. These people are essential to a fair and impartial election and must be protected to maintain a viable democracy.

Equally serious is interference with the performance of the duties of an election official. This constitutes an attempt to obstruct an election, the bedrock of our democracy. We cannot permit this to happen.

The bill sets out the pernicious actions that are prohibited such as disclosure of personal information of an election official that poses a serious threat to the official, false allegations about an official's performance of election duties, and physically obstructing an official's access to a place where the official performs election duties.

This bill must have enforceable penalties to be effective. A violator of this law is liable for damages caused by the violator's action and may be subject to a civil suit brought by the official or the Attorney General. The violator may also be charged with a gross misdemeanor.

We urge the committee to approve this bill in order to preserve the integrity of our election process.

George Beck  
Clean Elections Board of Directors.

