



Association of
Minnesota Counties



LEAGUE of
MINNESOTA
CITIES

February 17, 2020

To: Members of the House Government Operations Committee
Re: County and City Presidential Primary Concerns

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties and League of Minnesota Cities, organizations representing all of Minnesota's 87 counties and over 800 cities, we write to all committee members with concerns regarding the upcoming presidential primary election and potential impacts to voter privacy and participation.

Over the past few years, House and Senate members have worked collaboratively with our associations and election administrators to implement important changes to the presidential primary system, including changes to guarantee reimbursement of local expenses related to this new election as well as making sure voting data was not kept on publicly accessible registration lists. These changes have been bipartisan in nature and have enjoyed the support of both our elected officials and the public, at large. **Voter privacy and accessibility are paramount priorities for our election administrators, commissioners, and council members. The current presidential primary law continues to raise alarms for our members when it comes to preserving voters' privacy and may create chilling effects on voter participation and voting experiences.**

As it stands today, statute requires the Secretary of State's Office to provide the chair of each major political party "a list of voters who voted in the presidential primary and the political party each voter selected." As time moves closer to the date of the presidential primary, our members have heard significant concerns from the public about the apparent lack of restriction on how major party officials might use or share the data as well as the primary concern voiced which is why a voter's data would be shared to multiple parties in the first place. Locally elected officials share these residents' concerns and also worry about how those concerns might impact participation as well as interactions between election administrative staff who may receive the brunt of criticism and frustration.

While our associations remain neutral on which legislative solution is best, AMC and LMC will stand in support of bipartisan proposals that address the concerns raised by voters and elected officials and remain willing and committed to working on a solution that will be in the best interests of voters.

Sincerely,

Matt Hilgart, Government Relations Director
Association of Minnesota Counties

Gary Carlson, Intergovernmental Relations Director
League of Minnesota Cities