



May 9, 2024

RE: Elections Omnibus

Dear Conference Committee Members,

Minnesota Youth Collective was founded in 2018, to build power, develop and support movement leaders, and fight for political and policy victories that will make a more equitable and just state.

Young people nationwide, and especially here in Minnesota, have long since demonstrated their commitment to creating change; in their communities, on school campuses, and at the ballot box. Minnesota has proudly led the nation in voter turnout for years, and youth are central to that success. Yet, young people face some of the largest disparities in accessing democracy, and we are writing today to express support for key provisions of the Elections Policy Omnibus bill.

- **Temporary polling place on postsecondary institution campus** (House language – lines 22.7 – 22.12)
- **Minnesota Voting Rights Act** (House language – lines 4.18 – 13.5)

Additionally, we support the requirement that school districts statewide provide students with pre-registration and registration information. Receiving factual information from adults they trust is critical for young people's participation. This requirement will create opportunities for more young people to engage with our democracy, and they are more likely to be lifelong, engaged voters and be part of an electorate that is more representative of the country. This should be a key goal of our democracy – where those directly impacted are able to see themselves reflected in decisions.

Currently people under 35 make up 45.2% of the population of Minnesota, and make up one of the largest voting blocs. In just four years, Millennials and Gen-Z will be the largest population bloc in the country, and our state. We have a responsibility to create policies *now* that encourage their participation, not hinder it.

Adding temporary polling places on college campuses demonstrates Minnesota's commitment to young people and their voices. A survey conducted by Circle showed the second most common reason young people gave for not voting was lack of transportation to a polling place, and time off between classes or jobs. A polling place on campus would address both of these concerns. Minnesota has the responsibility to address barriers many young people face, and the opportunity to expand voter access – both of which are critical in creating a representational, thriving democracy.

We envision powerful, organized, and engaged young Minnesotans changing our state, for themselves and our future. These policies, and specifically these provisions, make Minnesota one step closer to that vision.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Natalie Somerson".

Natalie Somerson

Political Director | Minnesota Youth Collective