



April 16, 2020

Members of the House State Government Finance Division,

On behalf of our membership of over 800 cities across the state of Minnesota, I am writing in support of the legislation being considered today to appropriate Help America Vote Act funds to the Office of the Secretary of State and to authorize the secretary of state to issue emergency orders to conduct elections during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Secretary Simon recently convened elections administrators across the state to discuss possible tools and resources needed to conduct elections during a global pandemic. The language you are considering today reflects those discussions. The Department of Homeland Security has declared elections a critical infrastructure and as such, the Office of the Secretary of State and local elections officials must have the authority to conduct elections in a safe and secure manner under our current conditions.

Many Minnesotans currently live in jurisdictions that conduct elections by mail balloting only. This option should be expanded to all Minnesotans regardless of what area of the state they live in, particularly given the distancing guidelines we are all expected to follow to protect our most vulnerable populations. Vote centers and ballot drop boxes should also be made available to assist voters in a safe way.

As time passes and we all continue to assess the status of the outbreak, we know that things may change. But addressing these issues now will allow elections administrators time to ensure that our state's elections processes and infrastructure are safely accessible to Minnesotans. Additionally, the sooner elections officials are able to get information out to voters on changes enacted, the more confident Minnesotans will be in participating in the upcoming elections.

We as Minnesotans pride ourselves on strong voter turnout and ensuring that local elections officials have the resources to adjust as needed in these unprecedented times will continue this tradition of high voter turnout safely.

Thank you for all of the work you are doing on behalf of Minnesotans and reviewing this legislation today. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at alindstrom@lmc.org or 612-327-6898.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Lindstrom".

Ann Lindstrom
Intergovernmental Relations Representative

«Name»

«Date»

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