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SINCE 1913

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Members of the Elections Subcommittee,

Representing 833-member cities across the state, the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) supports the delete-all amendment to HF1603, the elections omnibus bill. Regrettably, I am unable to attend the committee hearing on Wednesday because I am in Washington, D.C. for the National League of Cities conference. Below I have highlighted specific provisions of the bill that the League supports.

Restoration of Voting Rights

LMC opposes the loss of voting rights for those convicted of a felony who serve the entirety of their sentence in the community and are not incarcerated. If incarcerated, LMC supports the restoration of voting rights to those convicted of a felony once they have completed their term of incarceration. This language in the bill will eliminate the administrative burden of challenging voters at the polls and determining eligibility from various jurisdictions. This will also eliminate the need for investigation by local law enforcement of those who have unknowingly registered to vote or voted before their rights were restored.

Early Voting

For those who vote in-person absentee prior to the seven days before Election Day, there is confusion and, in some cases, frustration that they are not allowed to place their ballots directly into a tabulator. To improve the voter experience and respond to the voter demand to vote early, we support this language increasing the time period that voters can place their ballots directly into the tabulator and creating a true early voting system.

Presidential Nomination Primary

Those who choose to participate in the presidential nomination primary will choose one ballot representing one major party. Currently, state statute requires that this party declaration be included in the public information list which can be accessed by any registered voter in Minnesota. Though the primary is a not an election but instead, a political party activity that the state has chosen to administer, it is anticipated that participants will be very concerned that their party affiliation information will be accessible by anyone. Making party choice information available only to the political parties is a critical change that needs to be made to state law this legislative session. Additionally, LMC supports allowing the primary to be conducted by mail and adding language to ensure that local units of government are fully reimbursed for administering this process on behalf of political parties.

In-Person Absentee Voting Location Hours

The League does not have a specific policy regarding absentee voting location hours but our members have expressed concern about staffing polling locations for the full 46 days. Elections administrators are wholly invested in making the voting experience as positive as possible and also want to do so efficiently as possible. In some areas of the state, it may not be the best option for absentee balloting locations to be open for the entire duration but instead develop hours that are more appropriate for the community.

Mail Balloting

Minn. Stat. § 204B.45 authorizes all non-metropolitan townships and cities with less than 400 registered voters located outside of the seven-county metropolitan area to hold elections by mail. A city may conduct mail balloting for an individual precinct having fewer than 100 registered voters, subject to the approval of the county auditor. Staffing and equipment needs can be very costly and mail balloting is an efficient way of conducting an election for cities that have lower numbers of registered voters regardless of location in or outside the metro area. LMC supports lifting the arbitrary prohibition of mail balloting for jurisdictions within the metro.

Ranked-Choice Voting

The League of Minnesota Cities supports legislation that would give statutory cities the same authority given to charter cities to consider and adopt Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV). The League also supports statewide standards for those cities that choose to adopt RCV to ensure it is implemented consistently throughout the state to give voters confidence in the fairness of the alternative process of casting their ballots and in the outcome of such elections.

Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Election Security Appropriations

LMC has continued to advocate for the Office of the Secretary of State (OSS) to have access to the full HAVA funding appropriated by the federal government. City officials worked with many stakeholders convened by the OSS in determining the most effective and efficient way to spend the funding made available to the state. Elections administrators are ready and eager to partner with the OSS to strengthen and secure Minnesota's elections infrastructure.

Thank you for consideration of this bill. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at alindstrom@lmc.org or 651-281-1261.

Thank you,



Ann Lindstrom
Intergovernmental Relations Representative