



May 8, 2024

Dear Chair Carlson, Chair Freiberg, and Members of the Elections Conference Committee:

ISAI AH is a multi-racial, state-wide, nonpartisan coalition of faith communities, Black barbershops, childcare centers, and other community-based constituencies working toward racial, economic, and climate justice in Minnesota. Our mission is to empower our diverse constituencies to act collectively in the public arena toward changes that benefit all.

No matter what we look like or where we come from, Minnesotans deserve to be at the center of our democracy. We celebrate the hard work of the Elections Committee in both the House and the Senate to deliver on that vision, particularly this session as the Conference Committee considers several important provisions. Those include the Minnesota Voting Rights Act to protect voters, especially Black voters and other voters of color, from voter suppression and a campus early voting polling location provision that would give college and university students greater access to the polls, regardless of access to transportation or time off from class.

But we know that a handful of corporations and special interests tend to advocate for policies that protect the wealthy few instead of everyday Minnesotans. Senate Language UEH4772-1 Lines 7.24 - 7.27 presented in the side-by-side would significantly expand the scope of a proposed exception to lobbying rules. By including public officials, the loophole is widened to apply to all officials at any level of government:

*(10) an individual providing information, data, advice, professional opinions, variables, options, or direction on a topic on which the individual has particular expertise through education or professional or occupational training to a public or local official at a lobbyist's request;*

Minnesotans deserve to know who is trying to influence our decision makers, no matter what position they may hold. As such, we oppose the addition of this broad language in any final Conference Committee report, and urge members of the committee to oppose this particular language. Thank you for your consideration and your continued efforts in expanding and protecting our democracy.

Sincerely,

Lars Negstad, Policy Director, ISAI AH