

John Hultquist - Re: My testimony-Omnibus bill HF691

From: Kris <ktpavek@msn.com>
To: "John.Hultquist@house.mn" <John.Hultquist@house.mn>, "rep.sheldon.johnso...
Date: 3/26/2017 6:01 PM
Subject: Re: My testimony-Omnibus bill HF691

Please accept my written statement below as my formal testimony

Kris

From: Kris <ktpavek@msn.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 26, 2017 5:57 PM
To: John.Hultquist@house.mn
Subject: My testimony-Omnibus bill HF691

The following is my testimony for omnibus bill HF691:

I do not want legislators to continue to oversee redistricting in Minnesota. I believe redistricting should be done by an independent commission. I am proud that our state has had little to no gerrymandering of districts up to this point, but codifying in law the ability of legislators to oversee redistricting will put us at risk of increased gerrymandering. Please do not include this in the omnibus bill.

I also don't support provisional ballot legislation in this omnibus bill. THERE IS NO REASON TO INSTITUTE PROVISIONAL BALLOTING IN MINNESOTA. Provisional balloting is a thinly veiled attempt to keep "certain people" from voting. We have NO voter fraud in Minnesota. So there is no reason to institute this initiative.

Thank you in advance for doing the right thing for Minnesotans!!

Kris Pavek
1829 Fieldstone Rd SW
Rochester, MN 55902

John Hultquist - Redistricting

From: Cecilia Dingley <ceceding56@gmail.com>
To: <John.Hultquist@house.mn>, "Sheldon.Johnson@house.mn" <Sheldon.Johnson@h...>
Date: 3/26/2017 9:09 PM
Subject: Redistricting

Dear Mr. Hultquist: Please accept this email to be included as formal testimony on HF691.

Dear legislators: Please do not include legislator-controlled redistricting, provisional ballots, or dismantling the public finance campaign subsidy program in omnibus bill HF691.

I oppose legislators redistricting. Republican legislators have been trying to push through HF314/SF86 bills which would allow the Legislature to decide voting districts. Here are some examples why gerrymandering is wrong. In 2012, the year after lines were drawn, Republican candidates for the Wisconsin Assembly won less than half of the statewide vote, but 60 of the Assembly's 99 seats. Another example cited occurred in North Carolina where Democrats got 51 percent of the vote for the US House of Representatives, but received only four of the state's 13 congressional seats. As a MN voter, I would like to choose my representatives and not have the legislators choose me. I support legislation such as HF246 which would provide for a non-partisan commission to redistrict. Redistricting as it has been done in MN is not only costly, but doesn't give voters a chance to know their candidate. The last time redistricting was done by the MN Supreme Court, some voters only knew of their candidates in February for a November election.

I'm also opposed to provisional ballots. They make it very difficult for some voters to cast a ballot. We should be making the voting process easier, not more difficult. With provisional ballots, votes would be cast, then set aside until a challenged voter's eligibility is reviewed by election authorities and either affirmed or denied. These changes are not needed. The current system works well, and some voter registrations could be wrongly challenged through data-entry errors. It will also add to administrative costs.

The public finance campaign subsidy program is important. As a response to the Watergate scandal in 1974, the subsidy program provides financing through an income tax write-off and a tax credit for individuals who contributed to candidates. The candidates agree to spending limits, and this is a reasonable way especially for first-time candidates to get funding since they get a 10% funding increase.

Sincerely,
Cecilia Dingley
3443 Jasper CT NE
Rochester, MN 55906

John Hultquist - Input on H.F. 691

From: Ron Bardal <rbardal@hotmail.com>
To: "john.hultquist@house.mn" <john.hultquist@house.mn>
Date: 3/26/2017 11:17 PM
Subject: Input on H.F. 691

Dear Mr. Hultquist:

Please consider this as citizen's input on H.F. 691 for the pending hearing on this bill.

Clauses in H.F. 691 will abolish the state elections campaign account for public subsidy of candidates for statewide elective office in Minnesota. The clauses appear in Article 1, lines 6.29 through 7.2, and Article 2, lines 67.24 through 68.2. Maybe there are similar clauses that I missed elsewhere in H.F. 691.

This public subsidy program has existed for 25 years and has been successful. In 2016, almost 90% of the candidates running for office participated. Loss of this program will be detrimental to our democracy by diminishing the voice of lower and middle class citizens who cannot afford to spend millions of dollars as "big money" and "dark money" interests do in an ever-increasing amounts.

I ask that public subsidy of candidates in Minnesota be continued.

Thank you,

Ronald V. Bardal

1783 19th Terrace NW,
New Brighton, MN
651-633-9238

John Hultquist

From: <dobler@hickorytech.net>
To: <john.hultquist@house.mn>
Date: 3/27/2017 8:37 AM
Cc: <rep.sheldon.johnson@house.mn>
Attachments: Testimony-redistricting-omnibus-HF691.docx

Dear Mr. Hultquist,

I am requesting that the attached document be including as testimony in the today's (March 27, 2017) meeting of the House Committee on State Government Finance as as they consider HF691.

I have also cut-and-pasted my document in the body of this email if it is easier for you to include it in this manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to include my voice in the official record of this committee.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Pillers Dobler
1817 W Welco Dr, St Peter, MN 56082

Re: HF691 (State Government Finance Omnibus Bill)

I would like to express my support of including the language from HF246, Section 2, Subdivision 1, and oppose the language from HF314, Section 1, Subdivision 1(b) concerning the body responsible for prescribing congressional and legislative bounds. I strongly support the use of an independent commission of retired judges rather than a group of only legislators.

I have attended and viewed both House and Senate committee meetings on this issue, and at all meetings, the authors of the bills (HF314 and SF86) indicated that legislatively drawn bounds were constitutionally mandated. In fact, Article IV of the constitution states "the legislature shall have the power to prescribe the bounds of congressional and legislative districts." Note this does not state that the legislature must prescribe the actual bounds, but rather that they have the power to prescribe them. This power to prescribe does not preclude the appointment of commissions of individuals other than legislators to draw the bounds with the legislature having the final power to approve or disapprove said bounds.

I do, however, support the guiding principles set forth for prescribing bounds in both HF246 and HF314. Yet, as a statistician, I also know that "optimization under constraints" can have none, one, or multiple solutions. If, in fact, there are no solutions, then the number of constraints will be reduced (using the priorities stated in the bill) until one or more solutions exist. As the incumbency constraint has the lowest priority, it may well be that this constraint will be void. Thus, the redistricting plan may indeed meet all the other constraints, yet still produce bounds that favor incumbents or have a partisan bias.

What are the potential consequences of employing the method of legislator-drawn bounds rather than independent-commission drawn bounds.?

First, competition in legislative races may be diminished. In published, peer-review studies, researchers have repeatedly concluded that legislatively-drawn districts reduce competition. The primary consequence of reduced competition is reduced voter turnout.

Second, there is a strong possibility that the state will face legal challenges by using this method. Wisconsin has been ordered to submit a new redistricting plan, as has North Carolina and Virginia. Each of these states draw districts using legislators. In the past in Minnesota, legislator-drawn bounds have been contested with the courts being the ultimate prescriber of bounds at the expense of considerable time, resources, and funding.

Finally, consider the trust the people have placed in you, our representatives. Enacting a bill that inherently encourages partisanship, bias, and conflict of interest erodes the very trust that is necessary for democracy to prevail. Historical Gallup polls consistently show that the legislative branch has the least trust of the three federal branches. Legislator-drawn bounds have the potential to diminish the trust between the people and the government by the perceived conflict of interest.

Please consider the detrimental consequences on democracy of using only legislators, as in HF314, to prescribe congressional and legislative bounds. Instead, please consider the establishment of an independent commission composed of retired judges, as in HF246. This commission would remove any appearance, whether real or perceived, of conflict of interest, and would ensure competitive races and increased voter turnout, while limiting potential costs of time, resources, and funding on potential court cases.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opposition to this method of prescribing congressional and legislative bounds in HF691.

Carolyn Pillers Dobler, St. Peter, Professor Emerita of Statistics at Gustavus Adolphus College

SOURCES:

“Reevaluating the Effects of Redistricting on Electoral Competition, 1972-2012,” Jamie L. Carson, Michael H. Crespin, and Ryan D. Williamson. *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, 2014, Vol 14(2) 165-177.

Perez et al v. Abbott et al. U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas filed March 10, 2017.

Bethune-Hill et al v. Virginia State Board of Elections et al. Supreme Court of the U.S. decision March 1, 2017.

Whitford et al v. Gill et al. U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin filed January 27, 2017.

Alabama Legislative Black Caucus, et al v. The State of Alabama et al. U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama Northern Division filed January 20, 2017.

North Carolina et al v. Covington et al. U.S. District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina stayed January 10, 2017.

“Americans’ Trust and Confidence in Three Branches of Federal Government.” September 19, 2016.

[http://www.gallup.com/poll/195635/americans-confidence-government-takes-positive-turn.aspx?](http://www.gallup.com/poll/195635/americans-confidence-government-takes-positive-turn.aspx?g_source=approval+judiciary+legislature+executive&g_medium=search&g_campaign=tiles)

[g_source=approval+judiciary+legislature+executive&g_medium=search&g_campaign=tiles](http://www.gallup.com/poll/195635/americans-confidence-government-takes-positive-turn.aspx?g_source=approval+judiciary+legislature+executive&g_medium=search&g_campaign=tiles). Accessed March 19, 2017.

John Hultquist - Public Comment HF 691

From: Lindsay Turner <lindsayturner@gmail.com>
To: <john.hultquist@house.mn>, Jim Davnie <rep.jim.davnie@house.mn>, <rep.sa...>
Date: 3/27/2017 9:11 AM
Subject: Public Comment HF 691

Good morning John,

I'm writing to see if you could include the following in the public written record on HF 691, due for a hearing in the House State Government Finance Committee this afternoon. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns in getting this before the committee. Thanks so much!

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My name is Lindsay Turner and I'm a constituent of Rep. Davnie. I'm writing today to request that **the Public Campaign Finance fund continue to be funded at current levels; I'm against any cuts** to this important public fund.

Since the Citizens United decision, special interest groups have funded campaigns at record levels, and getting elected is an increasingly costly venture. Minnesota is not immune to this national issue. One of our 2016 Senate races was the most expensive in the nation.

I want to live in a Minnesota where our legislature reflects the socioeconomic diversity of the State, where running for elected office isn't contingent on the accumulation of huge amounts of wealth -- either in a prior career, or through soliciting huge donations from special interest groups. I want to live in a Minnesota where the state values competitive, contested elections, and spends money in line with those values. I want to live in a Minnesota where small dollar donations from many people, coupled with public money, can create competitive campaigns, so that voters have meaningful choices from among diverse candidates.

Please, continue Minnesota's awesome 25 year history of having one of the best public campaign finance funds in the nation. **Please, don't include language to HF 691 that would cut funding from our public campaign finance fund.**

Thank you,
Lindsay Turner
Minneapolis, MN 55406

John Hultquist - House State Government Finance Committee RE: Public Campaign Financer Program

From: Luke Anderson <lukethegr8@gmail.com>
To: "John.hultquist@house.mn" <John.hultquist@house.mn>
Date: 3/27/2017 9:21 AM
Subject: House State Government Finance Committee RE: Public Campaign Financer Program

Hello, my name is Luke Anderson. I am writing to express my desire to see the funding for the Public Campaign Finance program continued. I have read that there is some discussion, mainly by Republicans, of eliminating this program. This would be very harmful, as this program allows ordinary folks to run for public office without having to rely on special interests to fund their campaigns. This program has been in place in Minnesota for 25 years and has been cited as an example of best public campaign funding. I don't want to live in a Minnesota where electeds lack socioeconomic diversity or are in the pockets of special interests. Can you pass along this request to the rest of the House State Government Finance Committee? Thank you.

Luke Anderson
3600 16th Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55407
612-729-1230

John Hultquist - H. F. 691 - please don't repeal state elections fund

From: "Debra Christensen" <dchristensen@visi.com>
To: <john.hultquist@house.mn>
Date: 3/27/2017 10:34 AM
Subject: H. F. 691 - please don't repeal state elections fund

To the Members of the House Government Finance Committee:

I strongly oppose abolishing the state elections fund. This fund has served the citizens of Minnesota well, for over 25 years. It has safeguarded our right to govern our state as we see fit – whether Republican or Democrat – without big money or big corporations trying to sway the outcome.

The very core of democracy today is under attack by special interests and privileged, wealthy individuals. It becomes even more important that we strengthen and retain those institutions that are non-partisan and support equal access to government participation by all citizens. Our country is predicated on the idea that together, we will make better, wiser decisions than one individual or one opinion/group could ever make.

This means that we need a diversity in our governing bodies, young/old, outstate/urban, rich and poor. The state elections fund is one tool that helps secure that diversity.

Please do not abolish the state elections fund!

Sincerely,
Debra Christensen
8509 Zenith Road
Bloomington, MN 55431