



2/27/2023

Dear Chair Noor and members of the Minnesota House Human Services Finance Committee:

I'm writing on behalf of Advocates for Better Health, an organization representing 4,500 physicians and medical students living and working in Minnesota. As a physician organization, we recognize that a healthy inclusive democracy is necessary for the wellbeing and health of our communities. The best way to protect our democracy is to expand it. This session we have a real opportunity to improve the health of our state by ensuring our democracy is inclusive of all Minnesotans. I urge you to support the Democracy for the People Act (HF3) this legislative session.

Voting matters for health. When we as Minnesotans are healthier and more connected to our neighbors, our voices are stronger and our institutions more accountable. Research from the Health & Democracy Index found that communities with high voter participation enjoy greater social cohesion and better health. States that make elections more accessible through policies like automatic and same day registration, non-strict voter ID requirements, felon re-enfranchisement and mail voting options enjoy higher levels of voter participation and better public health outcomes. While Minnesota is currently ranked as the 15th easiest state to cast a ballot, there is clearly room for improvement through adoption of policies like The Democracy for the People Act (HF3) to protect and expand access to democracy and ensure the voices of all Minnesotans matter. The best way to protect democracy is by expanding it.

Myself and my colleagues know all too well the health impacts our patients experience that can be positively influenced by civic engagement and voting. Policies play a significant role in public health, and the elected officials that enact these policies are an important part of public health. HF3 has the potential to significantly impact the daily lives and health of Minnesotans by expanding democracy and ensuring that more Minnesotans are able to vote and easily register.

Community health and wellbeing would be considerably improved by the passage of The Democracy for the People Act (HF3) and I strongly urge the Human Services Finance committee to pass this bill including the expansion of automatic voter registration because it will address historical voter registration disparities and advance health equity.

Thank you for your leadership and I hope the committee will support this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Zeke McKinney' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Zeke McKinney, MD MHI MPH  
President of Advocates for Better Health