



MINNESOTA COUNCIL  
ON FOUNDATIONS

*a community of grantmakers*

3/3/2025

**Re: HF550 Bipartisan Redistricting Commission**

Dear Chair Scott and members of the committee,

My name is May Yang, and I am the Senior Manager of Policy and Partnerships with the Minnesota Council on Foundations (MCF). MCF is a statewide association of more than 150 Grantmakers focused on ensuring Minnesota has a strong charitable sector and an inclusive democracy where everyone can be seen, counted, and heard. We are committed to strengthening democratic systems and civic participation. As part of this, we support state decisions and investments that will prepare Minnesota for a full 2030 census count and redistricting processes that put people first through fair representation.

We are heartened to see efforts to reimagine the redistricting process for Minnesota. The creation of a commission recognizes that Minnesota's traditional process has not been working. However, we wish to express some concerns with the proposals outlined in HF550 which would minimize community input.

- HF550 proposes that commissioners be appointed by elected officials which allows for conflicts of interest. To ensure that commissioners are acting in the best interest of all Minnesotans and not favoring any one party, we advocate that for an appointing authority that is not affiliated with any political party.
- The redistricting principles listed in HF550 rank Communities of Interests towards the bottom. Ideally, the preservation of communities of interest would be closer to the top. Doing so would allow for Minnesotans with shared policy concerns, history, language, geography, and more to be empowered.
- There is no language for hearings to occur during the evenings or weekend when more community members can attend and be heard. We encourage language that commits to hearings scheduled during the evenings and weekends to maximize Minnesotan's participation and ability to have their voice heard.

We urge the committee to consider other redistricting approaches that better promote fairness and community participation. Minnesotans deserve an independent, community-focused, accessible, and transparent redistricting process which is necessary to ensure all Minnesotans have equitable representation and influence in our democracy. **As such, we urge the committee to consider the With Us For Us Redistricting Amendment (HF4593) introduced by Representative Klevorn last session as a model which better promotes fairness and participation.**

MCF knows firsthand the power of community informed redistricting and what independent commissions can produce. In the 2021 redistricting cycle we partnered with 12 community-based organizations to form the Our Maps MN Unity Cohort. Our group educated and trained over 400



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Minnesotans across the state about redistricting and how to draw community of interest (COI) maps. These COI maps were drawn by communities in tribal reservations, greater MN, the Twin Cities metro area and beyond.

The cohort then used these maps to draw a recommended legislative and congressional map that adhered to redistricting requirements set by federal and state law. The outcome was a redistricting plan that kept COIs together, united Minnesota's northern Native communities in one congressional district, and more. Most importantly, the experience showed that Minnesotans not only desire to be engaged in redistricting, but they can in fact lead in the process.

In summary, **we urge the committee to trust in the power of everyday Minnesotans and pursue an independent redistricting commission via the With Us For Us Redistricting Amendment which maximizes community input and participation.** Doing so would best allow Minnesotans to have a role in ensuring district lines reflect changing community needs and interests.

**An independent commission would promote a more inclusive democracy by establishing redistricting processes and principles that maximize community input and participation, allowing Minnesotans to have a role in ensuring district lines reflect changing community needs and interests.**

Thank you to the committee for your leadership and interest in redistricting reform and for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,  
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