



Dear Representative Quam and House Elections Committee Members,

The St. Anthony-New Brighton School Board and St. Anthony City Council stand in opposition to House File 69, requiring school districts and cities to hold elections on even-numbered years. While we understand the reasoning, we believe this is an unnecessary mandate, requiring boards and city councils to change something currently within their control.

As you know, school board and city council elections are nonpartisan. We are stewards of democracy at the local level. In St. Anthony, we take pride in and are serious about maintaining the nonpartisan stature of both governing bodies. Our School Board and City Council focus our professional development on governance and the importance of honoring multiple perspectives in our learning. We engage in rigorous, respectful discussion as elected leaders *without partisan labels* and our decision-making ensures our schools and municipal government serve the needs of our students and residents now and in the future. For our community, moving to even-year elections would erode that history and create more contentious and partisan elections, following along with state and national trends.

We believe it is already difficult for school board and city council candidates to be heard and get their message out in even-year elections when national and state candidates are on the ballot. Our organizations believe it is more costly to conduct effective City Council and School Board campaigns in even years when considering the financial resources needed to compete for attention with state and national contests on the ballot. Odd year elections allow voters to solely focus on local issues.

This bill is unwarranted and disrupts our system that is already functioning well. We urge you to reconsider and rescind HF 69.

Sincerely,
Laura Oksnevad, School Board Member and Legislative Liaison
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