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Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

Minnesota State Capitol - Room G-23

75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard., St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Chair Quam and Members of the Elections Finance and Government Operations Committee,

My name is Arthur Miller. I am an eighteen year employee of the Minnesota Sex Offender Program in Moose Lake. I am writing in support of HF1840.

There are several strong reasons why civilly committed individuals should vote in their home counties rather than the counties where they are held:

1. Preserving Community Representation – Counting their votes in the county where they are held can distort local political representation by artificially inflating the voting population of the facility's location rather than their home communities. Their political interests and concerns are more aligned with their home counties, where they have ties to family, employment, and community resources.

2. Preventing Gerrymandering and Electoral Distortion – Facilities housing civilly committed individuals are often located in rural areas,

potentially shifting political power away from the communities where these individuals actually reside. Ensuring they vote in their home counties maintains fair and accurate representation.

3. Maintaining Meaningful Civic Engagement – Civil commitment is not incarceration; many of these individuals maintain legal rights, including voting, as they should. Allowing them to vote in their home counties strengthens their connection to their communities and ensures their votes reflect their long-term interests.

4. Aligning with Residency Standards – Many states consider an individual's permanent residence as the place they lived before institutionalization. By ensuring civilly committed individuals vote in their home counties, states align their voting laws with residency standards applied to students, military members, and others temporarily housed outside their home jurisdictions.

5. Encouraging Successful Reintegration – The goal of these programs is that civilly committed individuals eventually return to their home communities. Voting in their home counties keeps them engaged in local governance, which can aid reintegration and civic participation upon release.

6. Preventing Unintended Political Influence – Large facilities can skew local elections if their populations are counted in the jurisdiction where they are housed rather than their actual home communities. This can shift policy priorities in ways that do not reflect the interests of either the facility residents or the local community.

7. Due to the small community sizes, there is potential for a civilly committed individual to run for, carry enough votes from within a large facility, and be elected to a local seat. This would create a magnitude of problems,

ranging from security protocols, to legal restrictions as far as participation in meetings (i.e. local school board), to having a civilly committed individual as a community leader greatly hindering the individuals focus on treatment.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue. I am confident that, with your support, this bill will make a significant positive impact in ensuring that civilly committed individuals retain their right to vote in their home counties, reinforcing fair representation and civic engagement.

Sincerely,
Arthur Miller
President

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