

100%

100% Campaign
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April 5, 2021

Chair Michael Nelson and Members of the State Government Finance and Elections Committee,

We're writing today to express our support for nine provisions of Chair Nelson's State Government Omnibus bill, the DE amendment to House File 1952, as posted on April 5, 2021.

Minnesotans are voters. We expect Minnesota's governments to be fully representative, responsive to popular demand, and capable of acting both in a crisis and for the long-term. Meeting those expectations depends on Minnesotans' having the ability to freely exercise our votes. Chair Nelson's bill improves our voting system for Minnesotans in nine ways we support.

First, we support the Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) provisions (*Lines 54.2-59.29*). Adopting an Automatic Voter Registration system will make it easier for Minnesota voters to register. We interact with our state government in wide variety of ways: applying for driver's license or a hunting license, health care benefits or a housing program, to name a few. Each of these is an opportunity to make sure we are all registered, by sharing the required data with the Secretary of State.

Second, we support the bill's restoration of voting rights for formerly incarcerated Minnesotans (*Lines 47.17-47.21, 48.13-48.15, 79.1-79.3, 96.24-97.17*). This is a long-overdue, bipartisan proposal. Over 50,000 Minnesotans deserve the chance to fully participate in our voting system again. All Minnesotans will benefit from their increased engagement and active contributions to our democracy.

Third, we support the inclusion of protections from voter intimidation, voting-related deceptive practices, and voter interference (*Lines 93.15-96.23*). These provisions are an important way to safeguard Minnesota voters and protect our democracy. Every Minnesotan should be able to exercise their right to vote free from intimidation, interference, or knowingly and materially false voting information.

Fourth, we support the author's effort to make sure state and local election officials have the funds they need to make our election system more effective for all Minnesota voters (*Lines 45.12-45.23*). To ensure the system as whole is functional and adequately funded, we should make sure federally prescribed funding, like that in the Help America Vote Act account, can be used in a timely and transparent way by our Secretary of State (SOS).

Fifth, we support the requirement that our Secretary of State prepare voting instructions in languages other than English (*Lines 63.22-63.25*). This is a common-sense improvement that will make our voting system more accessible for Minnesotans across the state.

Sixth, we support ensuring emergency response providers are expressly eligible to vote absentee (*Lines 60.26-60.30*). It's sensible to ensure that these professionals do not have to choose between exercising their duties or their vote.

Seventh, we support the allowing ballot boards to open signature envelopes 14 rather than 7 days before an election (*Lines 66.26-66.27*). This is reasonable way to ensure ballots are counted expeditiously by ensuring certain pre-processing steps can start earlier.

Eighth, we support the requirement that post-secondary institutions be required to provide certain student enrollment data to county auditors (*47.7-47.11*). This will both serve to protect the voting rights of students and serve to cut down on confusion at polling areas that serve students.

Ninth, we support updating the rule around ballot assistance in polling places (*Lines 79.33-80.1*). The rule, as is, can create a barrier to voting, for example, when multiple voters needs language assistance and there is only one suitably bilingual polling place worker.

Thank you for your work this year to improve Minnesota's voting system.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Conry', with a stylized, cursive script.

Chris Conry
Campaign Director
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cc: Secretary of State Steve Simon, Rep. Emma Greenman, Rep. Cedrick Frazier, Rep. Kristin Bahner