



MINNESOTA COUNCIL
ON FOUNDATIONS

a community of grantmakers

March 10, 2025

Re: Opposing HF550 – Bipartisan Redistricting Commission

Chair Niska 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. 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 excited to see redistricting reform efforts in Minnesota. However, we have reservations about the model outlined in HF550. The proposed model favors political parties and not the interests of everyday Minnesotans. Additionally, there are insufficient plans for community participation and transparency.

Minnesotans deserve an independent, community-focused, accessible, and transparent redistricting process which is necessary to ensure all Minnesotans have fair representation and influence in our democracy. 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 over 400 Minnesotans about redistricting and how to draw community of interest (COI) maps which reflected the diversity and geography of the state. These maps were used to draw a recommended legislative and congressional map which was submitted to the Minnesota Special Redistricting Panel. The plan kept COIS together, united Minnesota's Northern tribes in one congressional district, and more. Most importantly, this experience demonstrated 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. Thank you to the committee for your leadership in redistricting reform and for the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely,
May Yang
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