



March 4, 2022

Dear Chair Nelson and Members of the State Government Finance and Elections Committee

Minnesota's local governments play a leading role in the administration of local, state, and federal elections throughout the State of Minnesota. As everyone can agree, election systems are the heartbeat of our democracy and represent the pillars of public faith in our institutions as a whole. **As such, the Minnesota Association of County Officers, League of Minnesota Cities, Minnesota Association of Townships, and Association of Minnesota counties support all mechanisms that would further invest in our elections systems by providing opportunities to further strengthen security measures and training while also and providing protections to the vast number of election judges, poll workers, volunteers, and administrators across our state who make our system function.**

As committee members are aware, local election officials will face new and increased security challenges in the 2022 elections and beyond. Increased state assistance—as represented in HF 3870—will improve physical security of polling places and election offices and further enhance the physical security of election systems. As drafted, the bill provides access to necessary resources for officials statewide to better protect election workers, equipment, and activities and to increase voter confidence in the election process. Additionally – and importantly – our organizations appreciate HF3870's recognition of the role local election officials play in election security by authorizing the use of this funding for training, including training for election officials and election judges. As on-the-ground volunteers in the polling places and on the ballot boards across the state, equipping election judges with resources and training adds another layer of protection to the security of the election. These judges will gain tools to secure the polling places, the election records, and the election equipment and systems. It will also provide confidence which may help in recruiting and retaining judges.

Furthermore, our organizations appreciate the provisions of HF 3666 that provide a series of protections for elections officials performing official duties related to elections. As local election officials, it was important to us that any protections extend to election staff and election judges, which this bill does. Our members have reported concerns from election judges regarding their safety and increased questions regarding what they should do if their service as a judge is hindered by other individuals. Election officials view HF 3666 as an opportunity to provide our valued election volunteers, judges, and staff confidence in their security and protection from harassment.

We thank committee members for their work on behalf of our state and look forward to continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

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