

I am writing in support of the proposed COVID-19 contingency plan for elections.

I am originally from Wisconsin and was horrified by the chaotic and dangerous situation that played out there today. I'm also a poll worker, and even as a relatively young election judge, the prospect of working a 12+ hour day in the height of a pandemic gave me a great deal of pause. I love working elections, but I shouldn't have to risk my life to do it.

Fortunately, Minnesota has some time to prepare and resources from the HAVA and CARES federal funds to support planning so that we can hold elections safely, transparently and with minimal disruptions. I believe the best route towards that goal is to expand our options for voting by mail. We already have vote by mail for precincts in greater Minnesota with less than 400 people, and there has been no evidence of fraud as a result. We can build on that success and expand it beyond the small towns where it has been a vital program.

I am not advocating for moving entirely to vote by mail, but for a both/and system and building flexibility into the law for local jurisdictions to make a determination about how to handle in person voting in emergency situations, so that there's a clear line of responsibility and we can avoid the sort of court fights that caused so much chaos in Wisconsin. We also need to be careful to provide guidance about how to avoid disenfranchising groups that may need to rely on in person voting. But by planning now, we can find a solution that will allow all eligible voters to participate and continue to have confidence in our elections.

Thank you for your attention.
Sarah Keuper
Minneapolis