January 9, 2023

Rep. Mike Freiberg

Chair, House Elections Finance and Policy Committee

RE: HF28 – Right to vote restored to individuals convicted of a felony upon completion of any term of incarceration imposed and executed by a court for the offense

Rep. Freiberg,

I am writing to express my strong support for HF28, which would restore the right to vote to individuals convicted of a felony upon completion of incarceration. Current Minnesota law creates a form of second-class citizenship, reminiscent of Jim Crow laws, made up of formerly incarcerated individuals who are living and working in our communities but who are denied the right to vote. This situation is repugnant to our notion of democracy, in which every citizen who has reached voting age is assured the right to vote, and cannot be denied the right to vote based on skin color, gender or economic status. Current Minnesota law disproportionately disenfranchises people of color and reeks of a racism that has no place in our democracy.

I urge the Committee to approve HF28 as written, and block any amendments designed to deny the restoration of voting rights to individuals convicted of certain felonies, or to impose financial obligations on those seeking restoration of the right to vote.

Respectfully,

Clifford E. Kashtan, MD

St. Louis Park, MN