



February 27, 2023

Dear Rep. Mohamud Noor and Members of the House Human Services Finance Committee,

The Minnesota Public Health Association (MPHA) recognizes that a healthy inclusive democracy is necessary for the wellbeing and health of our communities. MPHA is a volunteer-driven organization with 350 public health professional members across the state of Minnesota. Our mission is to create a healthier Minnesota through effective public health practice and engaged citizens. With this mission and [MPHA member support for increased voter engagement](#), we strongly feel that the best way to protect our democracy is to expand it.

This session we have a real opportunity to improve the health of our state by ensuring our democracy is inclusive of all Minnesotans. MPHA urges you to support the Democracy for the People Act (HF3/SF3) this legislative session.

Fair and inclusive voting structures support health equity by assuring that all Minnesotans have fair representation and resources, including communities that have traditionally been marginalized. Research from the Health & Democracy Index found that communities with high voter participation enjoy greater social cohesion and better health. States that make elections more accessible through policies like automatic and same day registration, non-strict voter ID requirements, felon re-enfranchisement and mail voting options enjoy higher levels of voter participation and better public health outcomes. While Minnesota is currently ranked as the 15th easiest state to cast a ballot, there is clearly room for improvement, especially when we consider the health disparities our American Indian communities and communities of color experience.

Community health would be considerably improved by the passage of The Democracy for the People Act (HF3/SF3). We strongly urge the House Human Services Finance Committee to pass this bill including the expansion of automatic voter registration, thereby addressing historical voter registration disparities and advancing health equity in our state.

MPHA supports the Democracy for the People Act, as it begins to make the promise of democracy real for us all. This is a make or break moment for our democracy and what we do now in Minnesota matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen Saliars". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Ellen Saliars, MPH  
President  
Minnesota Public Health Association