



March 7, 2023

Dear Chair Freiberg and Members of the Elections Finance and Policy Committee,

We are writing on behalf of the League of Minnesota Cities, Association of Minnesota Counties, and the Minnesota Association of County Officers in support of HF 1140. Minnesota's local governments play a leading role in the administration of local, state, and federal elections throughout the State of Minnesota and as such support the following provisions to increase efficiencies in elections administration:

- Expanding the in-person absentee balloting and direct balloting time period from 7 days to 14 days. This timeline was utilized in 2020 for one year and was extremely helpful in providing ample time to process absentee ballots. Local election officials also heard from voters that they appreciated the ability to place their ballots directly into a tabulator during those days.
- Section 33 regarding write-in candidates. Currently, election officials spend considerable time and resources to count and individually record write-in votes cast, many of which are frivolous. This would eliminate unnecessary work while still ensuring that legitimate write-in votes are counted.
- Section 36 regarding the passing of an ordinance or resolution for the changing of polling places. For many cities, polling places don't change from year to year, so it is not necessary to have to pass a resolution each year unless those locations change.
- Section 40 to expand mail balloting to jurisdictions to all eligible jurisdictions, not just those located outside of metropolitan counties.

Finally, we greatly appreciate the inclusion of the sample ballot notice process update provided in Section 51 of the bill and thank the Minnesota Newspaper Association for their support and guidance of this provision. This updated process will reduce confusion for voters who may receive a newspaper publication that serves multiple jurisdictions and thus show sample ballots that may not reflect the actual ballot that voter will receive for their jurisdiction's election. This will also update the publication information to ensure that voters who would like to receive a sample ballot have direct contact information for the election official in their jurisdiction so that they can request a sample ballot.

We appreciate the inclusion of these provisions within the bill, as they will increase efficiency in elections administration and improve the voter experience.

Sincerely,

Alex Hassel
Intergovernmental Relations
Representative
League of Minnesota Cities

Matt Hilgart
Government Relations Manager
Association of Minnesota Counties

Troy Olsen
Government Relations Consultant
Minnesota Association of County
Officers/Ewald Consulting