

Written Testimony HF9
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Mr. Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Ginny DeLuca. I'm originally from the East Coast and I moved to Minnesota 30 years ago. I'm a stay at home mom and as my kids have grown up, I've gotten increasingly involved in Minnesota politics.

I come from a political household and have nursed a life-long love of politics...in theory: the idea that we listen to one another and use our findings from public discourse to make decisions that are in the best interests of everyone. However, it has become clear to me we have a long way to go before our democracy works in the best interest of the *people*.

With our current campaign finance system under *Citizens United*, foreign countries are allowed to influence our legislators and corporations have more say in what kinds of laws our elected leaders make and how they affect us than we do. It's called "the Peoples' House" for a reason, and we should be the ones with our leaders' attention, not outside actors. We need to get big money out of our politics by implementing more strict disclosure regulations and a public financing system to avoid relying heavily on outside donors. Voters like myself enjoy contributing to campaigns we feel passionately about, but don't want to be undermined by corporations buying politicians through secret channels. They do not represent us.

Our voting systems and elections infrastructure should also see significant changes. When you turn 18, you should unequivocally be automatically registered to vote through an Automatic Voter Registration system. When my son went away to college, it was unnecessarily complicated to vote absentee. He had to vote in his college town over his home state of 18 years. Not just my son, but *everyone* should have a more accessible voting system. One that allows them to vote from the comfort of their own homes without any discredited claims of voter fraud. Formerly incarcerated members of our community should have the right to vote and be informed of their right upon reentry into society. Right now, our democracy is operating as only a "privilege" for the wealthy few, not as a "right" of citizens of the United States as outlined by our Constitution.

We need to make our democracy more accessible to everyone if we want it to work. If anyone is left out, it's no longer a democracy. We must actively invite people in, especially those who have been excluded from the process for far too long. I support the passage of HF9 to set us on the right path to build a democracy that works for *all* Minnesotans.

Thank you.