

HF3666

My name is Zoe Malinchoc DeVoe and I am submitting written testimony in support of this important bill.

As the 2022 election cycle kicks off, Minnesotans who donate their time and energy to the important and vital work of free and fair elections are met with challenge, derision, intimidation, and threat to their role in the state's sacred duty of governance. Without volunteer election officials, polling location volunteers, volunteer poll observers, and supporters, free and fair elections wouldn't be possible.

In Hastings, MN, the town just upriver from my hometown of Red Wing, MN, I have learned that the school board has experienced deeply divisive, intense criticism, scrutiny, and intimidation, which is ongoing. School board meetings should be places of business, not intimidation. The outcome reduces the chances that Minnesotans will desire to serve.

Undemocratic, uncomfortable, and unneighborly misconduct is becoming dangerous. The benefit of the doubt is no longer being left to our local and state elected school board, city council, and county commissioners. I welcome the language of this bill because I do not want Minnesotans who volunteer to run elections to be subject to divisive, unfair, and wrongheaded expressions of outrage and heated rhetoric.

In 2020, my husband was a volunteer poll watcher at a precinct polling location in the Cedars-Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis. There, he met five staff members of an international poll watching nonprofit organization, who ordinarily work on observing international elections in countries with new democracies.

Please continue working to protect the sanctity of democracy in our communities.

Sincerely,
Zoe Malinchoc DeVoe
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