

March 17, 2021

Representative Sandra Masin, Chair, and Honorable Members
Local Government Division

Subject: HF 89 – Elkins: Ranked-Choice Voting

Dear Chair Masin and Members:

The City of Minneapolis appreciates the opportunity to comment on HF 89 and supports this bill.

HF 89 would expand the use of Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) as a method of voting in federal and state elections in Minnesota, as well as allow for use in local elections in cities, counties, townships, or school districts. It would set statewide RCV standards and introduce guidelines around RCV voting systems and tabulation.

In 2006, Minneapolis was the first Minnesota jurisdiction to approve use of RCV in municipal elections through passage of Charter Amendment No. 161 with 65% in favor of the change.¹ Since then, Minneapolis has successfully conducted four RCV elections – three general elections (2009, 2013, 2017) and one special election for an open city council seat (2020).

In addition to Minneapolis, four other Minnesota cities have chosen to approve the use of RCV in municipal elections. In 2009, St. Paul voters adopted RCV with 52% in support.² The St. Louis Park City Council unanimously approved RCV by ordinance in 2018 after months of study and citizen input.³ In 2020, both Bloomington (51% in support)⁴ and Minnetonka (55% in support)⁵ voters approved RCV and are slated to use this voting method for the first time in 2021.

After each of its three general municipal elections using RCV, Minneapolis commissioned a statistically valid survey of voters, non-voters, candidates, and election judges to measure their experiences and opinions on the use of RCV.⁶ In each of these surveys, about 9 in 10 voters found it “simple” to rank their choices on their ballot (92% of voters in 2017); 3 in 4 were “confident” or “very confident” in the counting of votes (76% of voters in 2017); and a majority thought RCV should continue to be used in future elections (66% of voters in 2017).

Voter turnout has grown in each subsequent RCV election in Minneapolis, and there have been over 240,000 ballots cast across the City’s four RCV elections. Minneapolis conducts a post-election review of four precincts after each election to verify election equipment accurately tabulated votes on scanned ballots. This event is noticed and open to public observation, with party-balanced teams of election judges sorting ballots into each possible combination of candidate rankings. To date, this process has not discovered any discrepancies between the machine-produced totals and the manual review.

Ranked-Choice Voting has been used successfully across multiple elections and scheduled to be used in five Minnesota jurisdictions in 2021. Expanding the option to use RCV in local elections would allow for continued local determination regarding how to elect local leaders. Setting a clear tabulation process and providing standards for the implementation of RCV voting systems will benefit Minneapolis and other jurisdictions that have or will adopt RCV. Finally, post-election surveys in Minneapolis show most voters understand the system and support its use in future elections.

Respectfully,



Casey Joe Carl
Minneapolis City Clerk

¹ [2006 Minneapolis Election Results](#)

² [2009 St. Paul Election Results](#)

³ [History of Ranked-Choice Voting in St. Louis Park](#)

⁴ [2020 Bloomington Election Results](#)

⁵ [2020 Minnetonka Election Results](#)

⁶ [2017 Post-Election Report](#). See Page 57 for survey results.