



March 9, 2021

Dear Minnesota Legislators,

We are writing to urge you to support the Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) bill that is advancing at the legislature this session and to block preemptive bills. The pro-RCV bill (HF 89/SF 218) would implement Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in primary and general elections for state and federal offices, and would allow local jurisdictions to adopt RCV if they choose. With the bills receiving maximum sponsorship (35 in the House and 5 in the Senate), clone bills have been introduced by Rep. Cedrick Frazier and Senator Lindsey Port (HF 1375; SF 1651).

Minnesota is home to a robust and diverse group of employers, large and small, including sixteen Fortune 500 companies. While we differ in size, we share the need for stability and predictability in our economic and political environment. Our planning horizons are longer term and we require certainty in order to make investments that will deliver the growth our shareholders and owners expect.

As business leaders, we have viewed the increasing political polarization in our state and nation with growing concern and on January 6 we witnessed that polarization veer into political violence aimed at disrupting our democracy. This is not good for business. We must take action to strengthen our democracy and mitigate the kind of extremism and disinformation that led to the attack.

RCV is the only reform that disincentivizes negative campaigning and incentivizes candidates to build broad majority coalitions to win and retain them once in office. Under RCV, office holders are rewarded for compromising to get things done rather than obstruct even legislation with overwhelming public support. RCV encourages the kind of consensus-driven, bipartisan legislation that drives business certainty and addresses the economic needs of Minnesotans.

The business community believes Minnesota has significant challenges to address to ensure the long-term prosperity of our state – first and foremost the pandemic, but also health care, education, racial justice, infrastructure, immigration, business climate, and community safety, to name just a few. These issues are of critical importance because they influence our ability to conduct business and attract and retain employees in our state. They are also important for business considerations of expansion or relocation in Minnesota. We need our elected officials to work together in good faith to address these issues with bipartisan legislation that can stand the test of time. Your business community depends on it.

RCV is a simple, common sense way to encourage political candidates to appeal to a broad swath of constituents. Voters ranked their preferences, first, second, third and so on. If no candidate wins a majority

of first choices, then another round of counting occurs. The least favorite candidate is defeated and the votes cast for that candidate are reassigned to those voters' second choices. This process continues until one candidate receives a majority of continuing ballots. It works like a runoff but in a single, cost-effective election. [See RCV overview here.](#)

When candidates must appeal to voters for second choices and seek the votes of more people in their district, it changes the tone and tenor of political campaigns, focusing them more on the issues and less on attacking their opponents. It also drives greater engagement and turnout from voters who have become disillusioned with the current political system.

RCV is not a new, confusing or radical practice. It has been around for more than 100 years and is used around the world in democracies such as Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and Scotland. In the United States, it's used or pending use in nearly two dozen jurisdictions, ranging from large cities like New York and San Francisco to smaller cities like Vineyard, Utah and Eastpointe, Michigan. Alaska and Maine have already adopted RCV for elections at the state and federal level, and Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Springfield, IL use RCV for military and overseas voters.

RCV elections in Minneapolis, St. Paul and St. Louis Park have been successful, efficient and effective. Studies show that voters find RCV simple to use, and they prefer it over the current system. Elections are more competitive, voter turnout is higher, campaigns are more civil, and winning candidates take office with a majority of voter support. In local nonpartisan elections, RCV eliminates the need for separate primary elections, saving taxpayers and candidates time and money. Five cities in Minnesota -- St. Paul, Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Minnetonka, and Bloomington -- will use RCV for their mayoral and council races in 2021.

HF 89 (SF 218) is a simple, common sense change to the ballot but one that would have a positive change on the political incentives in our local, state and federal elections. It is the best answer to our increasing polarization, combative politics and gridlock. The reform delivers no partisan advantage and results in office holders who are a more accurate reflection of their communities, more responsive to their interests and more willing to reach consensus solutions to the many challenges facing our state. The local options measure in the bill restores local control and allows Minnesota communities the opportunity to choose this reform for their local elections if they see fit. As we plan for the future of our businesses, we must have a democracy that is resilient, inclusive and effective. RCV can help make that happen, and frankly, the future of our state depends on it.

Sincerely,

Marc Gorelick  
Sam Boren & Steve King

Jay & Page Cowles

Kelly Doran

Karla Ekdahl & Peter Hutchinson

Matt Furman

Penny & Bill George

Marilyn Carlson Nelson

Kim Nelson

Ken Powell & Wendy Bennett

Mike & Elizabeth Sweeney