



April 8, 2024

Chair Rep. Ginny Klevorn
State & Local Government Finance and Policy Committee

Chair and Committee Members:

The work of the African American Leadership Forum ('The Forum') is rooted in shifting systems and the people that lead them towards a more just future. We partner with communities, nonprofit organizations, foundations, and governments to co-create solutions focused on many social and economic concerns. For over 15 years, The Forum has harnessed the collective power of Black communities to solve complex social problems. Our goal is to build a just and healthy society that works equally well for everyone.

The African American Leadership Forum expresses its strong support for HF 3276, which would allow any municipality in Minnesota to adopt ranked choice voting (RCV) if they so choose. One of the most critical issues facing our democracy nationwide is voter participation. Poll after poll show us that people are dismayed by the polarization of politics and feel the rosters of candidates are too narrow. RCV provides one means for making voters feel more confident their voices will be heard.

Minnesota is known nationwide for its high voter turnout, but it would be even higher if more voters felt their preferred candidate had a real chance of making it through a primary or general election. Research shows that RCV systems result in many benefits, including:

- A reduction in partisan polarization and extremism- candidates must appeal to broader electorate rather than only speak to "the base"
- More coalition-building and collaboration among candidates
- More diversity in the candidate pool because they—as well as voters—no longer see election outcomes as a foregone conclusion
- Voters can cast their ballot for their favorite candidate without fear of wasting their vote
- Elimination of costly run-off elections because run-offs take place instantly in the RCV system

Thank you for considering this bill, and we ask for your support of HF 3276.

Sincerely,
Amber Jones
Managing Director | Policy Impact
African American Leadership Forum

Dr. Catherine R. Squires
Senior Fellow in Residence
African American Leadership Forum

