

To: Chair Klevorn, State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee Members

From: Paula Ramaley, Minnetonka resident City Council Member, Ward 3

Re: HF 3276

Date: April 6, 2024

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**Dear Chair Klevorn and Committee Members,**

**My name is Paula Ramaley and I'm writing in support of HF3276.**

**I live in Minnetonka, which uses ranked choice voting (RCV) for City Council elections, and I was elected to Minnetonka Council in Ward 3 in November, 2023.** I was a first-time candidate, ran for an open seat against two others, and won by a margin of four votes. That result was confirmed by a recount that was conducted with both great care and great competence by the City of Minnetonka's elections staff.

This was our community's second RCV election. **For voters this system has brought more choices, engagement and turnout. For candidates it has encouraged more voter outreach and civility.**

**For new candidates it has also meant their voices and ideas aren't extinguished in a (very) low-turnout August primary.** Under our old system, primary turnout averaged around five percent - that discouraged candidates from running unless they were an incumbent and/or had a strong local network as a real-estate broker, a lawyer, or something similar. But RCV has no primaries, which meant that all three candidates in my race had their voices heard in the marketplace of ideas all the way up until election day.

**Because candidates need to earn second-choice as well as first-choice votes, RCV incentivized candidates in Minnetonka to reach out to a wider range of voters. It also encouraged candidate civility** - because going negative isn't just wrong, it alienates potential second-choice votes.

**With RCV, more candidates are running, engaging and listening to more residents - plus they're campaigning in a respectful manner. This has, in turn, has fueled greater voter turnout.** Last year it was double that of similar past cycles (odd year, ward-only elections). All of these elements may be why our residents resoundingly rejected a ballot initiative to repeal RCV in 2023 - by an 18% margin.

**Minnetonka proves that smaller cities can successfully transition to RCV** - and it will be even easier for them to do so with the standards and equipment that this bill also provides. I encourage the committee to pass this bill so that all Minnesota communities have the option to adopt RCV.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Paula Ramaley  
Minnetonka, MN