

Senate Elections Committee
3:00 p.m. room 107, State Capitol

Monday, February 21, 2005

Members Present:

Wiger
Fischbach
Higgins
Hottinger
Kleis
Limmer
Marty
Marko
Pariseau
Scheid

Senator Wiger called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. A quorum was present at 3:10 p.m.

Agenda item #1: S.F.103-Marty: Clean Money Elections

Senator Marty presented an overview of the bill. The bill's intent is to take big money out of politics. He discussed how the situation has worsened over the years.

Jackie Moen, Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life, testified in opposition to both S.F. 103 and S.F. 863. She believed that these campaign finance reform bills would benefit the wealthy and hurt average citizens.

Senator Marty discussed his bill further and took questions from members.

S.F. 103 was laid over for further consideration.

Agenda item #2: S.F. 863-Hottinger: Fair and Clean Elections

Senator Hottinger introduced the bill.

Senator Hottinger offered the A-1 amendment. The amendment reinstated permission for political parties to work with their candidates and spend up to \$25,000 of the size of the subsidy in coordination with it. Amendment was adopted.

Beth Fraser, Public Policy Director for the Minnesota Alliance for Progressive Action testified in support of the bill. She argued that political party spending increased over five times what was spent in the previous election. She felt there was a need for campaign finance reform to allow for an equal playing field between incumbents and challengers. This reform would allow candidates to get their messages out without huge independent expenditures.

Gwen Myers, volunteer lobbyist with the League of Women Voters, testified in support of S.F. 863. She felt the current system allowed political parties and other independent groups to spend unlimited amounts of money to campaigns which undermines the public trust in the process. She stated that the bill was a comprehensive package that restores faith to the campaign process. She also discussed how other states are doing that comply with Fair and Clean Elections.

Arlene Mencke, member of the Minnesota Senior Federation, testified in support of S.F. 863. She felt campaign finance had a big impact on senior citizens, who have a very high utilization rate. She also said that raising money for campaigns was a big barrier to people who wanted to participate in legislating effective policy.

Rus Lyons, Minnesota Public Interest Research Group, testified in support of S.F. 863. He is a student at the University of Minnesota and was very active in getting students to vote in the last election. He stated that many students already felt disenfranchised and that their vote didn't count.

S.F. 863 was laid over for further consideration.

Senator Wiger adjourned the meeting at 4:34 p.m.

Senate Elections Committee

Chair: Chuck Wiger
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3:00 p.m.
Room 107 Capitol

Agenda

1. S.F.863-Hottinger: Fair and Clean Elections

Testifying: Beth Fraser, Minnesota Alliance for Progressive
Action (MAPA)

Gwen Myers, League of Women Voters

Arlene Mencke, Minnesota Senior Federation

Rus Lyons, Minnesota Public Interest Research
Group (MPIRG)

2. S.F.103-Marty: Clean money campaigns

Testifying (in opposition to both bills):

Jackie Moen, Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life
(MCCL)