



**STATE OF MINNESOTA**  
Office of Minnesota Secretary of State  
Steve Simon

April 5, 2022

Finance Committee  
95 University Avenue West  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Members:

I am writing to share my concerns with Senate File 3975, the State Government Finance Omnibus bill. Minnesota has a rich history of civic engagement, and free and fair elections. I fear that this bill could create additional burdens for election administrators and poses a risk to voter privacy. I understand the motivation in many provisions in the bill is increased transparency, but rigorous security measures are already built into our system, and we should work to bring the public further into the voting process using these existing procedures.

Sections 12, 16, 17, 29, and 33 all present logistical challenges to local election administrators and remove flexibility for counties to run elections in the manner that best serves the voters. Section 17 specifically prohibits local communities from assessing the needs of their own citizens when they provide additional, temporary absentee voting polling places for voters. The Office of the Secretary of State supports giving local election administrators the option to open additional absentee polling places for fewer than 46 days to accommodate the growth of absentee voting and to provide added flexibility and convenience for their voters.

Preserving voter privacy is imperative. This legislation, in Sections 7-11 would make public what is now sensitive and private information. This will be harmful to Minnesota voters and could create a liability for county officials if a challenge was applied inaccurately. I would ask the committee to remove this provision to continue the balance that Minnesota law currently strikes -- protecting sensitive data of voters while still providing transparency to Minnesotans via the wealth of data currently on the public information list. The privacy ramifications resulting from livestreaming absentee ballot drop boxes and absentee ballot board procedures in Sections 18, 23, and 24 are also concerning.

Minnesotans are rightfully proud of our state's election system, and Minnesotans continue to lead the nation in voter participation because we have confidence in our election system and the integrity of our vote. This confidence comes in part from the hundreds of elections administrators and tens of thousands of election judges who run elections across the state with integrity. Furthermore, the sureness is rooted in the opportunities for the public to witness testing, counting, and canvassing of each election.

I respectfully urge members to vote no on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Simon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve Simon  
Minnesota Secretary of State