



February 2, 2023

Dear Chair Carlson and Senate Elections Committee members,

The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) is the largest statewide association of nonprofits in the country, representing over 2,300 member organizations across the state. Through MCN, nonprofits join together across interest areas to work on issues of common interest to all. MCN works to inform, promote, connect, and strengthen individual nonprofits and the nonprofit sector.

MCN supports improvements to structures and systems of democracy that expand access to voting. **We write in support of SF3**, a voting rights bill that will expand voting rights for eligible Minnesotans. We specifically support the following provisions: restoration of voter rights for individuals convicted of a felony, automatic voter registration, and preregistration for 16- and 17-year-olds. These provisions will allow for greater civic participation and voter access.

The nonprofit sector has long been a champion of civic participation. Whether volunteering for a food shelf, serving on a board of directors, or running for office, we believe that a healthy society provides robust and equal opportunity for civic participation. We know that our organizations and our state count on it. Voting is for many the first and most consistent act of civic participation, one which lays the foundation for a lifetime of community engagement.

Restoration of voting rights after incarceration for people with felony convictions would allow people to participate fully in their communities and have their voices heard with their ballot. This provision would restore rights for nearly 60,000 Minnesotans, who overwhelmingly are Minnesotans of color, rural, and low-income Minnesotans.

Both **automatic voter registration** and **preregistration of 16- and 17-year-olds** would help reduce the cost of elections for taxpayers. Modernizing voter registration would cut the time and money the state previously spent on mailing, paper processing, and staff labor, which would allow resources to be better spent on other priorities.

Minnesota consistently has the highest voter turnout rate in the nation. MCN attributes this success to our state's strong election policies that facilitate access to the polls, and we look forward to continued partnerships with the legislature to further improve the processes.

If you have any questions about this issue or MCN, please connect with us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "marie ellis".

Marie Ellis
Public Policy Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ileana Mejia".

Ileana Mejia
Public Policy Advocate