

March 8, 2023

Honorable Members of the Minnesota Senate Elections Committee
Room 1200 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
95 University Ave. W.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support SF 2270 Ranked Voting in Elections

Honorable Members,

I am Evan Brown, a city council member in the city of Red Wing. I am writing in support of SF 2270 that would provide for ranked choice voting for federal and state offices, and additionally authorize local jurisdictions to implement ranked choice voting for local offices and authorize rules for those elections.

I have been working for a while to offer ranked choice voting to our residents by referendum to allow them to consider the use of this voting method in local elections. Our city is on an even year cycle, and state rules have prevented us from being able to utilize ranked choice voting on the same ballots as other state and federal races because of the strict ballot design rules that the state has adopted. I have long supported local options legislation to develop rules to allow for ranked choice races on the ballot with other races. Those legislative efforts have never made it thus far.

SF 2270 is the whole picture of not only adopting rules that would allow local, even year municipalities to offer residents a choice in adopting ranked choice voting, it creates an implementation task force to review the issues and recommend statewide standards. This I think is extremely important, as my experience with advocating for ranked choice voting at the local level has made me aware for the need for consistent and statewide standards as we have with all other aspects of elections and elections requirements in the state. Ranked choice voting has been left to develop individually by cities interested in adopting this method. Creating state standards would clarify the rules for everyone.

Also very important, and the area in which I most offer my testimony, is in the authorization for local adoption. This has been a major hurdle and stumbling block for home rule charter cities such as mine in being able to implement ranked choice voting. As I mentioned, ballot design and unclear rules have made it extremely difficult for a small city to consider ranked choice voting unless they would commit to odd year elections. For a small city, this can be a burden in another way of having to offer elections every single year, and have lower turnout local elections.

Thank you for considering this important bill. I fully support the text of SF 2270 and look forward to you advancing it.

Most Respectfully,

Evan Brown | Wards 3 & 4
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