

Steve Kelley
7 Fletcher Place
Hopkins MN 55305

Dear Chair Carlson and members of the Senate Elections Committee,

I urge you to recommend passage of Senate File 2270, the statewide ranked choice voting bill. I have been active in public life in Minnesota for many years and have long believed that we should have a voting system that results in our elected representatives having won a majority of the vote. Majority rule, combined with a civil respect for the rights of a minority, is the essence of democracy.

Most elections in Minnesota will continue to be races between two candidates where ranked choice voting will not be needed to identify one candidate as the majority winner. For those rare cases, typically statewide or congressional races where there are three or more candidates, Minnesota voters deserve a system that produces a majority winner rather than the current system in which we have numerous examples of elected officials who won only a plurality of the vote. Ranked choice voting is a proven system for identifying the choice of a majority in such multi-candidate races. It should be used in primaries and in the general election.

This year the Legislature has acted on, or will act on, bills to strengthen democracy by expanding access to the right to vote and making it easier for Minnesotans to vote. Ranked choice voting should be seen as one more measure that makes Minnesota more democratic.

It does not favor one party over another. In Alaska's last election, both a Democrat and a Republican won statewide office in different races.

I understand that there are concerns about the timing of implementation. A reasonable implementation date, such as 2026, is appropriate. It would be unreasonable to assume that Minnesota election institutions lack the capacity to implement a change that improves democracy. We should act on the belief that we have capable institutions that can implement ranked choice voting with reasonable preparations, supported by state government. Setting a deadline would reinforce our belief in the capacity of democratic institutions to carry out the people's will.

Thank you for hearing the bill and for your consideration of this letter. Please pass Senate File 2270.



Steve Kelley

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