

Senator Jim Carlson
Chair, Elections Committee
Minnesota State Senate
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3221
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Carlson and Members of the Committee,

I am a Political Science Professor at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. I teach courses and conduct research on legislative politics, organized interests, and the political representation of Black and Latino interests in Congress. I live in Eden Prairie, Minnesota with my wife and children, and I am concerned about the toxicity that we see in our politics nationally such as the refusal of political candidates to honor and respect the outcome of elections and the vilification of our honorable state and local election officials who run our election system. I am fearful that this toxicity might come here to Minnesota. So, in 2021 when FairVote Minnesota invited me to serve on the board to promote ranked choice voting, I happily joined this exciting effort because I want my children and the next generation to enjoy engaging in political deliberations and not fear it. I want them to consider public service as a respectable and honorable activity and not as one they should be ashamed of or feared.

This is why I encourage the state legislature to support the passage of Senate File 2270, *Protect and Advance Democracy Act*. This legislation would advance ranked choice voting statewide for federal and state elections in Minnesota. Ranked choice voting is not a partisan issue that secretly advantages one party over the other. Purple and Red states such as Maine and Alaska have adopted ranked choice voting with great success with both Democrats and Republicans winning statewide office under the system. Many other states have adopted ranked choice voting at the local level. Although cities in Minnesota such as Minneapolis, Bloomington, Minnetonka, and St. Louis Park tend to support Democrats at the local level, cities in Utah such as Riverton, Sandy, and Midvale support conservative leaning candidates. As we can see, no party is advantaged by the implementation of ranked choice voting. The biggest benefit of ranked choice voting for both parties and for democracy is that it reduces the chances of extreme candidates emerging from party primaries and general elections. These candidates contribute to polarization and hinder the ability of government to function properly because these candidates care more about their political party than their country.

The highly respected and non-partisan organization, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences has endorsed ranked choice voting as an effective tool to reduce polarization that exists in our political system. Now is the time to pass ranked choice voting. Ranked choice voting will not solve all of what ails our politics, but it is a wonderful step in the right direction. I encourage you to pass this legislation.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Minta

Michael D. Minta
Board Member, FairVote Minnesota
Professor, Political Science, University of Minnesota