



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

March 9, 2023

Senate Elections Committee  
Minnesota State Senate  
2100 Minnesota Senate Building  
95 University Avenue West  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606

Dear Senate Elections Committee Members:

I write in support of Senate File 2270, as amended by the A-1 amendment. This legislation makes critical and needed changes to advance ranked choice voting as a possible voting option in Minnesota. First, this legislation advances the policy of local control by allowing all cities, counties, and school districts the option of adopting ranked choice voting. Under current Minnesota law, the only municipalities that can choose to adopt ranked choice voting are charter cities. Allowing local governments to choose ranked choice voting will allow more laboratories of democracy to adopt this reform.

In addition, while it may seem like a small and technical matter, this legislation makes critical changes that will ensure the integrity of the voting equipment that administers ranked choice voting. Under current law, the Office of Secretary of State cannot certify any ranked choice voting functionality of equipment. This legislation changes that, and requires that all voting equipment that administers ranked choice voting meet state and federal standards and to be tested at the state and federal levels to ensure the equipment meets those standards. In addition, this will also allow local governments to use the full ranked choice voting functionality of voting tabulators and voting systems generally, which will provide efficiencies in tabulating ranked choice voting results.

This legislation also creates statewide standards for ranked choice voting. Currently, when a local jurisdiction has a question about ranked choice voting, our staff has limited resources to assist those jurisdictions. This is because today the requirements of ranked choice voting live only in city charters, and not in state statute. Placing the requirements and standards for ranked choice voting in Minnesota law will allow the Election Administration Staff at the Office of the Secretary of State to answer questions and support local jurisdictions who choose this method of voting.

Finally, I know there is a strong interest in the possibility of statewide implementation of ranked choice voting. Minnesota's election administration system is radically different than the centralized election systems of the two states that currently operate statewide ranked choice voting (Maine and Alaska). Moving Minnesota to a statewide ranked choice voting system would require either fundamental and architectural changes to Minnesota's election administration systems, or a new way of conducting ranked choice voting. For that reason, I support the idea of a taskforce to consider how Minnesota could adopt statewide ranked choice voting if the legislature decides to adopt statewide ranked choice voting.

As this legislation moves forward, I hope we will have further conversations about the taskforce membership and its charge. Some changes are needed. If the core of the taskforce charge is about administration and implementation (and not about the worthiness of ranked choice voting as a system), I urge the author to consider ensuring that the taskforce membership reflects that charge. Right now, the bill falls short on that score. For example, as the taskforce is laid out in the A-1 amendment, there will only be one non-metro county election administrator and one non-metro city election administrator on the taskforce. It is critical that we have at the table a representative sample of those that administer Minnesota's election systems at the local level as we discuss major changes to Minnesota's election systems. Otherwise, the legitimacy of the taskforce and its conclusions could be compromised.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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

Steve Simon  
SECRETARY OF STATE

C: Senator Morrison