



March 8, 2023

Dear Chair Carlson and members of the Elections Committee,

As the CEO and Founder of Vote Run Lead, a national organization committed to the advancement of women in politics, especially women of color, I am writing to you today in support of the Protect and Advance Democracy Act, and to express my fervent support of ranked-choice voting for Minnesota.

I frequently hear directly from women that they are hesitant to run for office, for many reasons including negativity and extremism in campaigning. Studies and recent history have shown that women/people of color are more likely to be successful in ranked-choice voting systems, and in jurisdictions using it, women are more likely to be fairly represented in city councils and mayoralities.

Ranked-choice voting is popular, reduces cost, and benefits constituents and communities. We have seen firsthand that ranked-choice voting is healthier for democracy, opening elections to more diverse voices and new candidates. This can create real, positive change in districts large and small.

We know that 60 jurisdictions across the country already use ranked-choice voting, including New York City, the states of Maine and Alaska, and five cities in Minnesota — all smoothly and successfully. Implementing ranked-choice voting is a transformative opportunity for Minnesota to continue to be a leader and model for the country in terms of voter participation and community engagement.

I strongly urge you to support The Protect and Advance Democracy Act. Thank you for your time and attention.

— *Erin Vilardi, CEO and Founder, Vote Run Lead*