

Dear Minnesota State Senate and Local Government Committee,

My name is Keri Johnson and I have lived in Southern MN for over 18 years. I am the HR Manager at the St. Peter Food Co-op & Deli and I serve on the St. Peter City Council. I also serve on the board of directors of Greater Mankato Growth and the Coalition of Greater MN Cities. Through these various roles, I understand the unique needs of my community and Greater MN. In rural communities, where we treat all people like neighbors, our neighborly culture is eroded and infected by increasing political divisiveness.

I support Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) because candidates running for office must consider appealing to ALL voters in their district, not just their base. A few years ago, I made a trip from St. Peter up to the Capitol to meet with my legislator. I felt very passionately about an issue and shared my thoughts for solutions with my representative. It was very frustrating to hear my representative respond with, "I agree with you on that, but the people who vote for me would never let me hear the end of it." My voice didn't matter because it was more important to my representative to appeal to their base.

In the region where I live, interest in RCV is increasing. Our local paper ran a recent story and there have been several community events to educate the public. When I speak with members of my community, they are both excited and curious about RCV. There is an appeal to move to ranking vs. local primaries, which have lower turnout and are costly for tax payers. It is also more and more difficult to recruit election judges in this current political climate. RCV can help reduce the number of local elections (primaries) and the confusion for voters. Additionally, RCV is well suited for when our local elections see a large number of candidates (ex. up to 8-10 candidates for School Board). It is much more empowering to the voter to rank candidates than to choose 1-2 from a list of 10.

I urge you to pass statewide and local option Ranked Choice Voting legislation this session (SF2270). The current system is not working. We need a better system that is more cost effective, efficient, restores confidence in democracy, and more accurately reflects the electorate's diverse spectrum of political views so that our representatives are incentivized to work for ALL the people they represent. RCV is a better way for Minnesota.

Thank you for listening and for your work this legislative session.

Kind Regards,

Keri Johnson, St. Peter, MN