

March 16, 2023

Common Cause MN is a nonpartisan grassroots organization working to create open, honest, and accountable government, more information about our work at www.commoncause.org.

Thank you, Sen. Morrison and Rep. Frazier, for moving SF2270/HF2486, a very important election reform.

Minnesota is home to over 18,000 statewide Common Cause MN multipartisan members and despite belonging to various MN party affiliations, or not being affiliated, the one thing they've come together to do is support our work ensuring our Republic's democracy is safeguarded, our elections continue to reflect the will of Minnesotans and everyone's vote counts.

We believe democracy is how a free society resolves its differences. And to do that well, we must all agree the process is fair, produces equitable outcomes, and reflects our communities, our values, and our priorities. Nobody wins all the time, but if the process is fair, at least we can trust it.

SF2270/HF2486 proposes the creation of a RCV task force consisting of approximately 26 to 28 members to engage election officials and recommend statewide standards for ranked choice voting tabulation and reporting processes as well as a timetable for implementation in federal and state elections. It also provides for authorization for local adoptions after January 1, 2024.

We've asked our base to reach out to committee members and share their thoughts on the proposed RCV Task Force in SF2270/HF2486. **As of this written statement, there have been approximately 1,932 written letters to members of this committee and the House Elections Committee.** Many of our members have some difficulties with writing or English not their primary language, they asked for help, and we provided a writing tool. Make no mistake thought, when you read their letters, you will see they have their own views on this issue. Please do not dismiss their messages if you see them repeated. I promised them I would share that with you both.

Ranked choice voting puts Minnesota voters in charge. Common Cause has supported RCV in New York, Oregon and California. We are excited to see SF2270/HF2486 before the Committee for consideration and work.

Currently, we ask members of the committee, Sen. Morrison and Rep. Fraizer to reconsider the following:

- The idea of the task force is a good one. Please replace politicians and special interests with more election officials, county auditors and elections administration staff to best align the Task Force recommendations with a positive outcome in the use of RCV for state and Federal elections. We cannot risk our elections with partisan or special interest dynamics hijacking the integrity of the space.
- The DE removed the requirement that meetings be open to the public and cites Chapter 30 on Data Practice but not Chapter 30D which is the Open Meetings Law chapter.
- The DE removed transparency from the office of the secretary of state by exempting greater disclosure on granting through application of Chapter 14, including Minnesota Statutes, section 14.386.

Key factors we consider when assessing proposed RCV reforms from the administrative process side are 1) Equipment, 2) Outreach, 3) Audits and 4) Budget. Other things we also look for is:

- whether there is equitable representation that is meaningful in the composition of who is making the decisions,
- whether there is parity in power among those decision makers,
- are members mentioned relevant to the process and/or matter they are leading; do they have special knowledge.
- whether the process maximizes opportunity for transparent, and
- does the public have access to information, voting and other relevant information.
- does the public get to interact with the task force or participate in a public and open process or is it a closed body.

Common Cause is grateful to our democracy partners, FairVoteMN, who have tirelessly championed this work biennium after biennium. It is an exciting time for pro-democracy reforms in Minnesota.

Thank you for your dedication to all Minnesotans as you work in committee.

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