



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of Minnesota Secretary of State
Steve Simon

January 11, 2023

Chair Scott Dibble
Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave West
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Dibble and Members of the Senate Transportation Finance and Policy Committee:

I am writing in support of Senate File 27, a bill that for many reasons will improve Minnesota's public safety and is long overdue. I understand there have been questions about how Senate File 27 would impact Minnesota's voter registration system and I want to address those questions here.

I want to start by emphasizing that Senate File 27 would have no effect whatsoever on any systems or procedures related to voting or voter registration. Under Minnesota's current voter registration system, driver's licenses are not used to provide evidence of citizenship. It is important to remember that there are many Minnesotans who hold a driver's license now who are not citizens of the United States. Under current law, a driver's license is not an indication of citizenship. For that reason, Minnesota's voter registration system does not use driver's licenses to demonstrate citizenship, but instead to provide evidence that someone applying to register to vote is who they say they are and lives where they say they live. Everyone who votes must swear an oath that they are eligible to do so, including that they are a United States citizen. The penalties for violation are severe—not only is it a felony but it is also a deportable offense and can be a permanent bar to citizenship for those on the path to citizenship.

Another question is whether the proposed Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) legislation would be affected by Senate File 27. It would not. The AVR bills introduced already account for the fact that noncitizens are eligible to receive driver's licenses. AVR legislation proposed in Minnesota allows data to be queued for registration only if the individual has provided supporting documentation of United States citizenship.

Finally, let me add that this issue is personal to me. My mother was a green card holder for over 30 years. She never became a United States citizen. As much as she inspired me in public service, she never cast a ballot in a United States election. But she did carry a Minnesota driver's license for decades. Her license looked just like yours or mine. While I understand that many mistake a driver's license for evidence of citizenship, that is not the case. It isn't today, and it certainly was not in the decades prior to 2003, when Minnesota placed further restrictions on who could be issued a driver's license.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate File 27, it is important and overdue legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Simon".

Steve Simon
Minnesota Secretary of State