

To the Senate Higher Education Committee,

I strongly urge you to support the bill written by USG to reform the Board of Regents. As we have seen in the past 6 months, the Board or Regents has failed to properly connect and understand the issues faced on our campuses and the needs of the diverse population of Minnesota.

The University of Minnesota follows a shared governance model that allows for input from all stakeholders to control how policies are written. It is against our values for the Board of Regents, the highest governing board to not have any representation or direct appointments by faculty, staff, and most importantly students, the largest stakeholders in the University.

The University of Minnesota is also a land grant institution and has a commitment to serve the state as a whole. This is why the additional representation from underrepresented groups across the state is essential. Minnesota has a complicated history of race relations and even though we have always claimed to be a welcoming place with great opportunities for education, our state has some of the worst racial disparities in the nation.¹

Adding more diverse perspectives is even more important as we have seen regents unable to understand the value of diversity in higher education. Not only is it something that more and more students want to have in their education,² but higher education provides a pathway to economic gain. If we are not actively including those who are underrepresented and not paying attention to who is missing out on the opportunities to higher ed is creating a system that selectively chooses who gets access to economic power. This work is so important to faculty, students, and staff that both Campus Assembly and the Morris Campus Student Association released statements emphasizing our commitments to diversity. The Student Association also sent a resolution asking for a person of color to be chosen as a vice chair and have been working on finding ways to ensure representation on the Board of Regents. This bill does exactly that.

Another key piece to this bill are partisan protections. The Board of Regents have incredible power over one of the largest institutions in the state of Minnesota. The budgets, values, hiring of executive leadership, and more important decisions should be made by people who best represent the University itself and the people of Minnesota, not the partisan interests of whichever party controls the legislature.

Overall, we feel that the Board of Regents necessitates some reforms to better reflect the overall population of the state of Minnesota. The University needs to be dedicated to the needs of its students,

¹ Specifically references statistics on the disparities of wealth and home ownership. Ingraham, Christopher. Racial inequality in Minneapolis is among the worst in the nation. Business. The Washington Post. May 30, 2020 Link: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/05/30/minneapolis-racial-inequality/>

² <https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2021/11/01/all-student-groups-want-diversity-campus>
This survey found that 76% of students survey said they would make it much more

employees, and to fulfilling our land grant mission. Any or all of the changes in these bills are small steps forward in removing political bias and creating a board that more justly represents our University.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this bill and most importantly representation of students,

MCSA Executive Committee

Hal Johnson
Representative to the Board of Regents

Dylan Young
Student Body President University of Minnesota-Morris

Noelle Muzzy
Student Body Vice President University of Minnesota-Morris

Jay Allard
Secretary of Student Services

Daleny Teske
Secretary of Resources and Operations

Kianna Big Crow
Secretary of Academic Affairs

Paisley Sierra
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer

Karis Begaye
Budget Manager

Cameron Berthiaume
Parliamentarian