



Chairman Carlson
3221 Minnesota Senate Bldg
St. Paul, MN 55155

February 19, 2024

Chair Carlson and Elections Committee members;

We submit this letter to express strong support for SF3616, a bill that seeks to expand opportunities for polling places on college campuses across Minnesota. This initiative is not only a significant step towards enhancing the accessibility of the voting process for young adults but also a vital measure in nurturing a lifelong commitment to civic engagement among the next generation of voters.

Research consistently underscores the profound impact that early voting experiences have on an individual's future voting behavior. A study from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University highlights that young people who are engaged in the voting process early in their lives are more likely to continue participating in elections throughout their adulthood. Establishing polling places on college campuses serves as an avenue to facilitate this initial engagement, thereby laying the foundation for more robust and active democratic participation in the future.

Moreover, students of color often face disproportionate challenges in accessing polling locations. Opening polling locations directly on college campuses not only acknowledges these challenges but actively tries to eliminate them. This effort aligns with the broader goal of creating an inclusive democracy that truly represents the diverse fabric of our society.

Furthermore, the presence of polling places on campuses sends a powerful message to students about the value of their voices in the democratic process. It demonstrates a commitment to making voting as accessible as possible, thereby encouraging greater participation among young people. This is particularly crucial in a time when the engagement of young voters can significantly influence the outcomes of elections and shape the future policy landscape.

In conclusion, the establishment of polling places on college campuses in Minnesota is a critical step towards empowering young voters, dismantling barriers for marginalized students, and fostering a lifelong commitment to civic participation. State university faculty encourage you to support this bill, recognizing its potential to transform the voting experience for thousands of young Minnesotans and, by extension, enhance the democratic process in our state and beyond.

Sincerely,

Jenna Chernega, President