



February 19, 2024

Chair Jim Carlson
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3221
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Carlson and Members of the Senate Elections Committee:

OutFront Minnesota writes in support of SF 3616 (Mitchell), an important bill to promote electoral participation among college student voters in Minnesota. This legislation is essential to reduce barriers to voting access for all college students in Minnesota, including LGBTQ+ students.

College students - including LGBTQ+ students - face significant barriers to voting. Students - particularly those who have moved from another state - may have limited information about how to register to vote or where to go on election day. Students are also more likely to work in hourly jobs or have class schedules that do not accommodate time off for voting. Those students who know where to go off campus to vote often lack access to the transportation needed to do so.

LGBTQ+ students can also face additional barriers to voting. A national study of LGBTQ+ voters found that 10 percent of LGBTQ+ voters - and more than a quarter of transgender voters - were unknowingly dropped from the voter rolls.¹ Almost half transgender voters surveyed also reported they either chose not to vote, or were unable to vote, as a result of their identification documents (including name and gender marker) not matching their current name, gender expression or presentation. Finally, a large share of LGBTQ+ voters - including more than half of BIPOC transgender voters - reported that they did not vote out of fear of being harassed while voting due to their identity.

SF 3616 would reduce many of these barriers to voting. Students would have the option to vote in a location that is easy to find, accessible, and efficient. Students would also have the opportunity to learn about the registration and voting process - and gain assistance if needed - in a familiar environment.

We urge your support for SF 3616 to strengthen our state's democracy for generations to come, and we thank Senator Mitchell for bringing this important legislation forward.

Sincerely,

Karlton Laster
Director of Policy & Organizing
OutFront MN

¹ <https://www.hrc.org/resources/lgbtq-voting-barriers-results-from-the-2019-lgbtq-voter-experience-study>