

RESOLUTION NO. 6482

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING LOCAL CONTROL FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS AND RANKED CHOICE VOTING FOR STATE AND FEDERAL ELECTIONS IN MINNESOTA

WHEREAS, Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is an opportunity to improve elections at the state and federal level where it would promote more civil elections, ensure majority winners in partisan primaries and general elections, eliminate the spoiler problem, reduce extremism and mitigate legislative gridlock by incentivising compromise and problem solving; and

WHEREAS, RCV is used in elections in Maine and Alaska and in countries around the world, including Ireland, Scotland, and Australia; and

WHEREAS, 85 to 95 percent of polled Minnesota voters who use RCV consistently say that RCV is simple to use; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of cities are exploring RCV because it provides a number of benefits over current expensive and low-participation local elections, including:

- Making voting simpler for voters by eliminating the need for local nonpartisan primaries and consolidating two elections into one;
- Saving the cost of primaries altogether in cities with odd-year local elections;
- Demonstrably increasing voter participation;
- Ensuring majority winners in a single election. Voters rank their preferences on the ballot, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and so on. If no candidate receives a majority of first choices, then the least popular candidate is defeated and their ballots are reassigned to those voters' second choices; and this process is repeated until one candidate receives a majority of continuing ballots;
- Making voting easier for deployed military members and other citizens abroad by requiring one less election for them to receive and return their ballots on time;
- Improving the civility of campaigning;
- Reducing the influence of outside money in campaigns; and

WHEREAS, all Minnesota townships and school districts, 86 of 87 counties, and 85 percent of cities fall under the statutory rule for the conduct of local elections and must ask permission of the Legislature to make changes to these rules; and

WHEREAS, local charter (or home rule) cities that hold elections in even years along with state and federal elections must comply with restrictive state partisan ballot design requirements; and

WHEREAS, there are no consistent rules for the administration of Ranked Choice Voting in local jurisdictions in Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) Local Options bill aims to remove regulatory barriers and extend the authority to adopt Ranked Choice Voting to local statutory jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the RCV Local Options bill provides for the flexibility to efficiently include ranked and non-ranked elections on a single ballot; and

WHEREAS, the RCV Local Options bill provides consistent standards for the administration of RCV in cities that choose to use it; and

WHEREAS, the League of Minnesota Cities supports the need for consistent RCV rules for use in Minnesota cities for both even and odd-year local elections; and

WHEREAS, the RCV local options bill contain no mandates, but simply provides local jurisdictions with the permission and tools they need to consider and implement RCV if they wish; and

WHEREAS, the Local Options measure is a significant opportunity to improve elections in cities, counties, townships, and school districts throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, The Bemidji Charter Commission voted unanimously during a special meeting of March 16, 2023 to support the legislation regarding RCV and also voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council adopted a Resolution supporting the legislation regarding RCV.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE UNDERSIGNED, we support Ranked Choice Voting for all state and federal elections. We also support removing regulatory barriers and giving all local jurisdictions in Minnesota the option to use Ranked Choice Voting if they decide it is right for their communities.

The foregoing resolution was offered by Councilmember Eaton, and upon due second by Councilmember Thayer, was passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Eaton, Thayer, Johnson, Rivera
Nays: Prince, Peterson
Absent: None

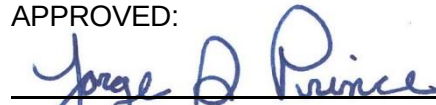
Passed: March 20, 2023

ATTEST:



Michelle R. Miller, City Clerk

APPROVED:



Jorge S. Prince, Mayor