



MINNESOTA COUNCIL
ON FOUNDATIONS

a community of grantmakers

March 19, 2024

Re: Census enumerator access and incarcerated persons in district plans

Dear Elections Committee,

The Minnesota Council on Foundations is a statewide association of grantmakers focused on ensuring Minnesota has a strong charitable sector and an inclusive democracy where everyone can be seen, counted, and heard. We are committed to strengthening democratic systems and civic participation. As part of this, we support state decisions and investments that will prepare Minnesota for a full 2030 census count and redistricting processes that put people first through fair representation.

The Minnesota Council on Foundations is excited to see the following priorities included in the SF4729 omnibus bill:

- 1. Census enumerator access:** Removing date restrictions for enumerator access has many benefits. First, this allows for operational adjustments deemed necessary by the Census Bureau, such as the adjusted timelines for census collection during the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, allowing for broader enumerator access related to decennial census activities ensures that the Census Bureau can thoroughly prepare for and evaluate Census enumeration efforts. Removing the time constraints from enumerator access promotes a fuller and more inclusive count of Minnesotans into the future.
- 2. Counting incarcerated persons in home districts:** Counting incarcerated persons at their last known address in the census allows for more accurate representation in legislative districting. Counting incarcerated individuals at their home addresses helps empower their home communities and ensures the needs and interests of these communities can effectively be represented. We emphasize the critical need to make all efforts to allow for incarcerated folks to be able to self-report their last residential addresses so that they may be accurately represented in their home district. These efforts promote a more inclusive democracy by ensuring that all residents, including those who are incarcerated, have a voice in shaping the policies and laws that affect their lives.

Thank you to the committee for your leadership in issues of democracy and fair representation and for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am happy to answer any questions or provide further information.

Sincerely,
May Yang
Senior Policy and Partnerships Manager
Minnesota Council on Foundations
myang@mcf.org