



Chair Jim Carlson
95 University Avenue West
Minnesota Senate Building, 3221
St. Paul, MN 55115

March 18, 2024

RE: SF 4729 Omnibus Elections Policy Bill

Dear Chair Carlson,

On behalf of the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA), it is my pleasure to offer our support of SF 4729, the Omnibus Elections Policy Bill.

Section 52, Lines 40.18-41.3

Thank you for the modification to statute that allows Minnesota school boards to pass a combined polling place resolution only when a change is made. This modification will benefit all 331 Minnesota public school districts that are required by current statute to pass the same consolidated polling place resolution every year, even when no changes have been made.

This revision will create a common standard and bring all polling place regulations into the same configuration. We appreciate your work to support our school boards in efficient and effective school district governance.

Section 18, Lines 14.30-15.29

MSBA supports the changes that modify the requirements of a school board when filling a vacancy. The modifications to statute will help public school districts by preventing costly and labor-intensive special elections from being held in off years after a board member resigns. Because they are outside of general election years, school districts are required to run these elections themselves. School districts do not have any dedicated funding to run elections so they must be paid for with the general fund, taking money out of the classroom.

According to data collected by MSBA, the average cost to a school district for an off year special election is approximately \$10,000 per election. Across the state in 2023, that's well over \$300,000 lost to pay for special elections which often have very low voter turnout.

MSBA also supports this bill's change in requirements when a school board member resigns less than 90 days prior to the end of the term. This revision states that the board may, but is not required to, fill the vacancy by board appointment. Given the 30-day waiting period that is

required after the resolution to appoint is approved, a board may do all the work of appointing to have a newly appointed board member serve at only one meeting before the end of a term. We value this local control and flexibility.

In closing, MSBA fully supports SF 4729. We thank the Senate Elections Committee for your ongoing commitment to improving school board elections.

Sincerely,
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