



February 21, 2024

Testimony on behalf of H.F. 3276 and S.F. 3868

Members of the Minnesota House and Senate,

We are writing to urge you to support the Ranked Choice Voting Local Options bill and to block bills that seek to ban this promising reform. The Local Options bill ([HF 3276/SF 3868](#)), introduced by Rep. Cedrick Frazier and Sen. Kelly Morrison, would allow all Minnesota cities, counties and school districts to adopt ranked choice voting if they wish. Currently, only a small number of cities with home-rule authority and odd-year local elections have the ability to use RCV, and it has worked well in the communities that have adopted it. We value giving all local jurisdictions the right to decide for themselves what is best for their communities, and we would like to see this promising reform expand across the state.

Minnesota is home to a robust and diverse group of employers, large and small, including sixteen Fortune 500 companies. While we differ in size, we share the need for stability and predictability in our economic and political environment. Our planning horizons are long term and require certainty in order to make investments that will deliver the jobs and growth our stakeholders expect.

As business leaders, we view the increasing divisions and extremes in our politics with growing concern. It's bad for business and damaging to our democracy. Taking action to mitigate extremism and strengthen our democracy is urgent, and RCV is a key solution. See *Memorandum: Why Ranked Choice Voting is critical to business*, attached below. We urge you to support HF 3276/ SF 3868.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Carlson Nelson
Penny and Bill George
Marc Gorelick
Evan Doran
Kim Nelson
Karla Ekdahl and Peter Hutchinson
Hunter Saklad
Jay Cowles
Scott Berney
Joe Green

Memorandum: Why Ranked Choice Voting is critical to business

Ranked choice voting (RCV) is the only reform that disincentivizes negative campaigning and incentivizes candidates to build broad majority coalitions to win and govern once in office. Under RCV, office holders are rewarded for getting things done, especially on those issues that have overwhelming public support. RCV encourages the kind of consensus-driven, bipartisan legislation that drives business certainty and addresses the economic needs of Minnesotans.

Minnesota faces significant challenges that are of critical importance to attract and retain employees in our state that will drive decision-making related to expansion or relocation in Minnesota. We depend on our elected officials to work together in good faith to address these issues.

RCV—also known as Instant Runoff Voting—is a simple, common sense way to encourage political candidates to appeal to a broad swath of constituents if they are to achieve the support of a majority of voters. [See RCV overview here](#). Candidates behave very differently when they benefit from second or third choice votes. They are less likely to attack an opponent because they don't want to alienate their opponent's base voters and risk losing second choice votes. As a result, it changes the tone and tenor of their political campaigns, focusing them more on the issues and less on attacking their opponents. It also drives greater engagement and turnout from voters who have become disillusioned with the current political system.

RCV is a viable, proven electoral system that has been used for more than 100 years in democracies around the world, such as Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and Scotland. In the United States, RCV is a bipartisan opportunity that is championed by Republicans in states like Utah and Alaska and by Democrats in Maine and cities like New York. States such as Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina have used RCV for military and overseas voters for years.

Minnesota cities have over a dozen years of experience with RCV, and [poll after poll shows that RCV is easy to use and voters love it](#). Elections are more competitive, voter turnout is higher, campaigns are more civil, and winning candidates take office with a majority of voter support. In local nonpartisan elections, RCV eliminates the need for separate primary elections in August, saving cities, taxpayers and candidates time and money.

Ranked choice voting is a simple change but one that would have a positive impact on the political incentives in our elections. It is a promising tool to address increasing polarization, combative politics and gridlock, and [polling](#) shows that voters who use RCV like it, find it easy to use, and want to see it expanded to state and federal elections.

RCV delivers no partisan advantage and results in office holders who better reflect their communities, are more responsive to their interests and are more willing to reach consensus solutions to the challenges facing our state. As we plan for the future of our businesses, we must ensure our democratic institutions are trusted, resilient, stable, inclusive and effective. RCV can help make that happen, and frankly, the future of our state depends on it. We can expand this important reform and allow more Minnesota communities the opportunity to use it by passing the RCV Local Options bill.