

A Resolution Supporting Local Control for Local Elections

WHEREAS, all townships and school districts, 86 of 87 counties, and 85 percent of cities fall under statutory rules 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 Local Options provision in the Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) bill aims to remove regulatory barriers and extend authority to adopt RCV to local statutory jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the RCV Local Options provision allows the flexibility to efficiently include ranked and unranked elections on a single ballot; and

WHEREAS, the RCV Local Options provision 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 provision contains no mandates, but simply provides local jurisdictions with the permission and tools they need to consider and implement RCV if they wish; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of cities have adopted RCV -- including Minneapolis, St. Paul, St. Louis Park, Bloomington and Minnetonka -- and more cities are exploring RCV because it provides a number of benefits over current expensive and low-participation local elections, including:

- Making voting simpler and more efficient 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 outcomes in a single election. Voters rank their preferences on the ballot, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and so on. In a single-seat election, 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; in a multi-seat election, this process continues until all seats are filled with the threshold for winning depending on the number of seats;
 - Empowering voters with more choice;

- Promoting more inclusive, diverse and representative elections;
 - Ending spoiler and wasted vote dynamics;
 - 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; and
- Reducing the influence of outside money in campaigns.

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

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

WHEREAS, local jurisdictions should have the opportunity to determine for themselves if RCV should be used for their local elections; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE UNDERSIGNED, we 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.

Signed by:

Mayor Márquez Simula
Council Member Rachel James

Columbia Heights, Minnesota
September 12, 2023