

February 13, 2025

Senator Carlson  
Senate Elections Committee  
Minnesota Senate Building.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Testimony submitted for 2/13/2025 Senate Elections committee in support of SF1071:

I am Tom Wiesen, I am a resident of Mahtomedi. Today I am representing Veterans for All Voters. Veterans for All Voters is a non-partisan Veteran oriented organization focused on fixing America's broken election systems.

Over a 30 year career in Manufacturing I have learned one immutable truth: The quality of a product is directly proportional to the quality of the process that created it. Likewise, the quality of our government is directly proportional to the quality of the election process that elects its members.

There is no perfect election process, this will always be the case when humans are voting with their imperfect knowledge, imperfect understanding, and their grossly imperfect motivations. There are no election processes that can't be strategically gamed or cheated, but there are systems that are better than others at leveraging the knowledge of voters and providing the best representative outcome of the majority of voters, and that is RCV.

RCV has many benefits over plurality voting including:

- Representing a majority of voters and not a minority plurality
- Conducting multiple rounds of voting with a single ballot
- Reducing toxic party dogma dialog and fearmongering
- Supporting the marginal candidate indifference principle, minimizing the "Spoiler" problem
- Enabling more participation by third party candidates. And as the Minnesota House clearly demonstrated in the first four weeks of the session, the usual suspect parties are less than capable of running government on their own.

I would like to focus on two elements, namely the myth that RCV violates the one person, one vote principle and the Marginal Candidate Indifference Principle.

The One person, One vote principle is largely referenced in redistricting and gerrymandering court cases, demonstrating the idea that all votes should have equal weight. When used as an argument against Rank Choice Voting, it assumes that our current system has one "One person, one vote", which is blatantly false.

There were four different potential opportunities for a Minnesota voter to cast a vote to elect each and every one of you to the seats you occupy today; General election, primary, political party convention, and caucuses.

Political party conventions are where the real power lies. Only the select few of the political party faithful, elected at private party caucuses, get to participate in the political party conventions.

When I say few, I mean  $< 0.1\%$  of any given precinct or district decides who will not only be the only option on the primary ballot, but pre-determining the winner for voters. In the 2024 Minnesota state elections, 92% of GOP and DFL house primaries were uncontested, making primaries more ceremonial than representative of voter's desires. All eligible voters can vote in the General election, but the outcome is, with few exceptions, predetermined by the demographics of the political party manipulated district lines with only 10% of Minnesota house districts being competitive.

Of the four voting opportunities, the one with the highest participation has the least weight and the one with the lowest participation has the most weight. Make no mistake, the current Minnesota election system does not have "One person, one vote" and RCV will only improve the situation by ensuring that winning candidates have the support of the majority.

There have been many court cases that determined that Instant Runoff voting or RCV does not violate the one person, one vote principle. RCV levels the playing field by allowing everyone's votes to have equal weight at each round of voting and does not ban anyone from voting.

Marginal Candidate Indifference Principle:

*If the outcome of an election process becomes significantly less representative of voter's desires just because an additional candidate enters the race, then the election process is flawed and needs to be fixed.*

With plurality voting, an additional candidate entering a race could dilute the vote of a candidate with similar values, causing the candidates with less supported values to win the election. RCV doesn't have this "Spoiler" effect as a single candidates are dropped from the pool of candidates at each tabulation cycle, not wholesale in one step, resulting in a winner that best represents the majority of voters.

The last Point I will emphasize is that SF1071 is not a mandate, it is an option. RCV will only be adopted where local voters decides to adopt it.

Whether any individual Senator supports RCV or not, it is in the best interest of the public to have choices and Senators should not be standing in the way of local government.

I urge you to vote yes on SF 1071.



**Tom Wiesen**

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Minnesota

<https://veteransforallvoters.org>