



March 4, 2025

The Honorable Senator Jim Carlson, Chair
Senate Elections Committee and Members
Minnesota Senate
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Carlson and Members of the Senate Elections Committee

March 11, 2025

Honorable Chair Carlson and Members of the Senate Elections Committee,

On behalf of Clean Elections Minnesota, I am writing to express our strong support for Senate File 1911, the Minnesota Civic Fund bill. As a nonpartisan organization dedicated to ensuring a healthy and inclusive democracy, Clean Elections Minnesota believes that the Minnesota Civic Fund offers a transformative opportunity to make our political system more equitable and accessible to all residents, regardless of their financial means.

The Need for Reform

Minnesota has long been a leader in voter turnout, with a proud tradition of civic engagement across all communities. We believe that every Minnesotan, no matter their age, race, or background, should have an equal opportunity to have their voice heard in our democracy. However, the current campaign finance system often tips the scales in favor of wealthy corporations and individuals who can flood our elections with large donations. This creates a political system where the voices of regular Minnesotans are drowned out by those with the deepest pockets.

Senate File 1911, the Minnesota Civic Fund, offers a bold solution to this problem by empowering everyday Minnesotans to participate in campaign finance in a meaningful way. This bill would create a statewide public campaign financing program, providing \$100 in credits to eligible Minnesota residents. These credits can be assigned to the candidate of their choice, who can then redeem them for public funds to support their campaign. This innovative program would give Minnesotans a new way to directly influence the political process – either through donations to candidates or by running for office themselves.

How Senate File 1911 Supports a More Inclusive Democracy

The Minnesota Civic Fund is not just a new way to fund campaigns – it is a step toward rebuilding a democracy that truly represents all Minnesotans, not just the wealthy and well-connected. This bill would:

- **Empower small donors:** Allowing Minnesotans to contribute as little as \$25 to support the candidates they believe in, ensuring that people from all walks of life can have a say in the electoral process.

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- **Encourage first-time donors:** Providing a pathway for new donors to get involved in campaigns and have a tangible impact on the political system.
- **Reduce fundraising burdens:** Allow candidates to spend less time fundraising and more time engaging with and listening to their communities.
- **Foster a thriving, multi-racial democracy:** Creating an electoral process where all voices are heard, regardless of a person's economic background.
- **Position Minnesota as a leader:** Making Minnesota the first state to implement such a program, once again putting us at the forefront of campaign finance reform and modernization.
- **Bring the voices of the people back into focus:** Helping to reduce the outsized influence of corporate money, allowing Minnesotans to shape their future on their own terms.

A Step Toward a More Representative Future

The Minnesota Civic Fund is a crucial step toward creating a political system that works for the people, not for billionaires and special interests. It will make our democracy more accessible, transparent, and responsive to the needs of our diverse communities.

We urge the Senate Elections Committee to support Senate File 1911 and take this bold step toward campaign finance reform. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Hartnett

Mary Hartnett

Executive Director

Clean Elections Minnesota