

March 11th, 2025

Chair Jim Carlson

3221 Minnesota Senate Bldg.

St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Carlson and members of the Senate Elections Committee,

My name is Maxwell Serota, and I am a senior at Carleton College in Northfield. Over the past three years at Carleton, I've worked as a fellow at the Center for Community and Civic Engagement where I've sought to help my peers engage with the political process through voting, legislative advocacy, and more. Through my work I've seen how engaging in the democratic process has empowered my peers to act on the issues they care about, and made some of the most significant issues facing our generation such as climate change feel less hopeless.

I am writing today in support of the Minnesota Civic Fund, SF1911. Our current campaign finance system places too much power in the hands of the wealthy at the expense of regular Minnesotans. Many college students feel this way too: during a listening session on money in politics I led at Carleton in the fall of 2023, attendees spoke about how our current campaign finance system doesn't feel like it is meant for them. Few if any students give to campaigns, fearing that their contributions will be drowned out by those of wealthy special interests. The Minnesota Civic Fund would amplify and empower the voices of all Minnesotans, including college students, and help to create a democracy responsive to its people. For college students participating in their first ever elections, credits from the Minnesota Civic Fund would allow them to support the candidates they believe in, and in doing so help teach them to practice and uphold democracy for the rest of their lives.

The Minnesota Civic Fund would allow young people to participate in our democracy at every level. Minnesota has long been at the forefront of youth political empowerment with some of the highest student turnout in the country. I strongly support SF 1911 and urge members of the Senate Elections committee to vote in favor of this important legislation to continue Minnesota's proud tradition of democracy.

Best,

Maxwell Serota

Student, Carleton College