

March 24, 2025

Common Cause MN is a nonpartisan grassroots organization working to create an open, transparent, and accountable government. Although we have a C4 arm, it is limited to lobbying activities, we do not endorse a political party or candidate. We have over 1.5M members nationwide and offices in 28 states, I lead the MN office. Over 26,000 Minnesotans belonging to various party affiliations, or not being affiliated, have come together to support our work ensuring our Republic's democracy is safeguarded, and everyone's vote counts.

We are grateful to Senator Westlin for moving SF1662, to increase transparency and accountability in local governance by clearly identifying the types of decisions that require public oversight and input.

We support SF1662 and ask Committee members to vote yes for the following reasons:

- **Transparency and Accountability:** By clearly outlining what constitutes a major decision, the bill ensures that significant actions taken by nonelected officials are subject to public scrutiny. This helps to prevent any potential misuse of power and promotes transparency in local governance
- **Clarification for Lobbying:** The bill specifies that attempts to influence nonelected local officials on major decisions are considered lobbying. This distinction helps to regulate lobbying activities and ensures that they are conducted in a transparent and accountable manner
- **Consistency in Decision-Making:** Establishing a clear definition helps to standardize what is considered a major decision across different local jurisdictions. This consistency aids in better governance and ensures that all significant decisions are treated with the same level of importance
- **Public Trust:** When the public understands what decisions are deemed major and how they are made, it builds trust and reinforces confidence in the local government. Citizens are more likely to feel confident that their interests are being considered and that there is an objective process in place
- **Effective Oversight:** Clear definitions allow for more effective oversight by elected officials and other regulatory bodies. It ensures that nonelected officials are held accountable for their actions and that there is a mechanism to review and challenge major decisions if necessary.

We ask Sen. Westin to revisit implementation needs of smaller local government as this bill makes its way to the next Committee:

Implementation Challenges:

- **Phased Implementation:** Consider a phased implementation approach to give local governments time to adapt to the new requirements. This can help smaller municipalities with limited resources gradually comply with the bill.
- **Resource Allocation:** Allocate state resources and provide grants to support local governments, especially smaller ones, in implementing the new requirements effectively.

Overall, SF1662 is a step toward enhancing the integrity and effectiveness of local governance by providing clear guidelines on what constitutes major decisions by nonelected officials.

Members, please vote “yes” on SF1662.

Annastacia Belladonna-Carrera
Annastacia Belladonna-Carrera,
Executive Director

