

STATEMENT OF NEED AND REASONABLENESS

The need arises to adopt Part 8250.1700 subp. 11 from the requirements of Minnesota Statutes 204D.11 subd. 1 which requires the Secretary of State to establish rules for the format of the white ballot. The rationale for the rule is as follows:

1. Part 8250.1700 is needed to reduce the rate of voter falloff apparently occurring under certain ballot configurations with punch card voting systems. At the 1988 general election counties exclusively or predominantly using punch card voting systems showed a marked increase in the number of voters failing to cast a vote for the office of U.S. Representative. The percentage of voters bypassing the office of U.S. Representative was 18.81% for counties using punch card systems compared to a 5.5% average statewide. This compares to an average among punch card counties of 4.15% in 1984 and 4.85% in 1986 for the office of U.S. Representative.

The only apparent reason for this increase in voter falloff is ballot format. In 1988 the office of U.S. Representative was the second of two offices on the page, in 1984 and 1986 it was the first office on the page. It appears some voters did not notice that the page contained more than one office to be voted on.

Given the limitations of punch card voting it is not feasible to give each office a separate ballot page. It is reasonable to provide a visual guide that clarifies to the voter when two offices are on a single ballot page. For that purpose this rule creates a more prominent visual separation of the offices and provides additional instruction to the voter.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 14.11 the proposed rule will not have any impact on agricultural land nor will the adoption of this rule result in additional spending by local public bodies in excess of \$100,000 per year for the first two years following the adoption of the rule. Also pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 14.115, the proposed rule will not have an impact on small business in Minnesota.