



Statement for the Committee on State Government Finance and Policy and Elections

Senate File 1225

Kathy Tomsich, League of Women Voters Minnesota

February 23, 2017

My name is Kathy Tomsich. I have been head election judge for over 12 years in Ramsey County. I am also a volunteer lobbyist for the League of Women Voters Minnesota. League does not support or oppose any candidate or political party. We work to ensure that voting is free, fair and accessible for all citizens.

I will be testifying in opposition to SF 1225 for several reasons.

First of all, SF 1225 would include in the public information list data that is now not public. The additional data includes information indicating whether the voter has been challenged because of a possible felony conviction or because the voter may be a non-citizen or some other reason. The Office of the Secretary of State testified on Feb. 21, 2017 that this data is only current as the date the Office receives it and sometimes, unfortunately, the information is not accurate. This bill would allow the data to be public which could have negative consequences for the voter. Our present system allows the voter to correct this status at the polling site in an efficient and uncomplicated manner without the voter being worried about his/her status being made public or concerned about inaccurate information being available for sale to the public. Introducing this data in public information will not enhance the voting experience; instead it will be a detriment especially when the information is inaccurate.

Secondly, we oppose the introduction of provisional ballots in Minnesota. It is an unnecessary and expensive change to our election system, an unfunded mandate that will only make our elections more complicated for the voters and election administrators.

Our current regulations regarding challenged voters are reasonable, clear, efficiently administered and fair to the voter. Any challenged voter who answers questions under oath and whose answers indicate that the individual is not eligible to vote in the precinct should not be allowed to vote under any circumstances. Allowing that voter to cast a provisional ballot certainly does not improve the integrity of the system and introduces an unnecessary complication to the election system. It is highly unlikely that a challenged voter in this situation would be able to prove that the individual's provisional ballot should be counted. At the same time, the counties would be burdened with the cost of administering the provisional ballots.

The League of Women Voters Minnesota urges members to vote NO on SF1225.

Thank you for your time.

