



League of Women Voters of Minnesota Records

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA

555 Wabasha Street, St. Paul, Minn. 55102 - 612/224-5445

Conferees

Rep. Seifert, Paulsen, Weazel
Sen. Larson, Flynn, Marty

112 State Capitol

7p.m.

S:\ACTION confcom.elause mail

rep. marty. seifert @ house. leg. state. mn. us
rep. erik. paulsen @ " " " " us
rep. steve. weazel @ " " " " " "
sen. col. larson @ senate. leg. state. mn. us
sen. john. marty @ senate. leg. state. mn. us
sen. Carol. flynn @ " " " " " "

sent e-mail for 7pm mtg

May 1, 2000

Dear Member of Elections Conference Committee:

HF2826 the Election Laws Bill has passed the House with an amendment limiting Election Day vouching to three people. SF2673 does not contain the provision to limit vouching and we ask that you resist any effort to add the amendment in conference.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota is opposed to measures to curtail same day registration. We firmly believe that while voting is a responsibility and privilege it is most importantly a fundamental right of American citizenship. The U. S. citizenship test asks the question, "What is the most important right granted to U. S. citizens?" The answer is "The right to vote." We urge you not to erect barriers to a citizen's exercise of that right.

In our transient society thousands of people move frequently to new communities. Same day voter registration through acceptable ID and through vouching has been a considerable help to voters seeking to participate in this most basic right of citizenship. It is no accident that Minnesota has led the nation in voter participation in elections.

We are frankly puzzled about the need to limit vouching at all and even more mystified to the number of three. What is the motivation to constrict access to the ballot? Have there been outbreaks of voter fraud due to vouching which threaten the integrity of the voting process? Where is the documentation to this effect?

The ability of a registered voter to vouch for new neighbors at the polls on Election Day is a reflection of the open and reasonable electoral process in the State of Minnesota and reflects well upon the traditions of fair and honest elections here. It is a measure of our quality of life and an indicator of our level of civility and trust in our fellow citizens.

Sincerely,

Judy Duffy
President

April 3, 2000

Dear Senator:

HF2826 the Election Laws Bill has passed the House with an amendment limiting Election Day vouching to three people. We assume that SF2673 its companion will be presented for a third reading very soon. At this time the Senate bill does not contain the provision to limit vouching and we ask that you resist any effort to add a similar amendment.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota is opposed to measures to curtail same day registration. We firmly believe that while voting is a responsibility and privilege it is most importantly a fundamental right of American citizenship. The U. S. citizenship test asks the question, "What is the most important right granted to U. S. citizens?" The answer is "The right to vote." We urge you not to erect barriers to a citizen's exercise of that right.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judy Duffy". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first and last names clearly legible.

Judy Duffy
President



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (651) 224-5445 FAX (651) 290-2145

February 22, 2000

Dear Member of the House of Representatives:

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota is opposed to HF 2826, which removes vouching as a method of same day registration. We firmly believe that while voting is a responsibility and privilege it is most importantly a fundamental right of American citizenship. The U.S. citizenship test asks the question "What is the most important right granted to U. S. citizens?" The answer is "The right to vote." We urge you not to erect barriers to a citizen's exercise of that right.

The League, the successor to the National Women Suffrage Association, has worked to improve citizen access to the ballot throughout its eighty-year history. The League offices in Minnesota, St. Paul and Minneapolis and 47 local leagues throughout the state answer questions about voting procedures all year but especially at election time. In our transient society thousands of people move frequently to new communities. Same day voter registration through acceptable ID and through vouching has been a godsend to voters seeking to participate in this most basic right of citizenship. It is no accident that Minnesota has led the nation in voter participation in elections.

We are frankly puzzled about the need to enact this legislation. What is the motivation to constrict Minnesota citizens' access to the ballot? Have there been outbreaks of voter fraud due to vouching which threaten the integrity of the voting process? Where is the documentation to this effect?

The ability of a registered voter to vouch for a new neighbor at the polls on election day is a reflection of the open and reasonable electoral process in the State of Minnesota and reflects well upon the traditions of fair and honest elections here. It is a measure of our quality of life and an indicator of our level of civility and trust in our fellow citizens.

WE URGE YOU TO DEFEAT HF 2826.

Sincerely,

Judy Duffy
President



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (651) 224-5445 FAX (651) 290-2145

March 1, 1999

Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives
State Office Building
St. Paul MN 55155

Dear Members:

This letter is to urge your support of H.F. 9. that prohibits a legislator from lobbying to influence legislation fore one year after leaving legislative office.

As you know the League has a long history of efforts to promote open, accessible, responsive and accountable government that encourages its citizens to be informed and to participate as voters and interested citizens in the making of laws.

Recently, the perception has taken hold that government is an activity only for insiders. This perception works against all of our efforts to involve citizens in the business of government. The recent election carried few mandates except for the message that people are tired of politics as usual.

Certainly efforts to build the public's confidence in the business of government should be supported. To emphasize that one not be an "insider" to be active and effective in speaking to legislators should be a clear message. One incremental step would be to pass H.F. 9.

We are encouraged by the bipartisan support for this bill and hope there will also be tripartisan support. At a time when the public is calling for continued government reform, we urge you to avoid the perception of undue influence in legislating by adopting this measure.

Thank you.

Judy Duffy
President



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS

M I N N E S O T A

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

Testimony by Judy Duffy, President, League of Women Voters of Minnesota
Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee
Friday, January 22, 1999
H.F. 9, author Sviggum

Thank you for your invitation to speak to you today in support of H.F. 9. I am Judy Duffy, President of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota.

As you know the League has a long history of efforts to promote open, accessible, responsive and accountable government that encourages its citizens to be informed and to participate as voters and interested citizens in the making of laws.

Recently, the perception has taken hold that government is an activity only for insiders. This perception works against all of our efforts to involve citizens in the business of government. The recent election carried few mandates except for the message that people are tired of politics as usual.

Certainly efforts to build the public's confidence in the business of government should be supported. To emphasize that one not be an "insider" to be active and effective in speaking to legislators should be a clear message. One incremental step would be to pass H.F. 9.

We are encouraged by the bipartisan support for this bill and hope there will also be tripartisan support. At a time when the public is calling for continued government reform, we urge you to avoid the perception of undue influence in legislating by adopting this measure.

Thank you.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (651) 224-5445 FAX (651) 290-2145

Testimony on SF 660
Senate Transportation Committee
February 24, 1999
By Pat Bugenstein, Volunteer Lobbyist

The right of every citizen to vote has been a basic principle of the League of Women Voters since its inception. We believe in protecting the right to vote and we believe in encouraging all citizens to vote.

This bill is important because it makes it economically feasible for persons with a mental illness to exercise their right to vote. Persons on SSI and SSDI can have benefits as little as \$525 a month to cover rent, food, clothing and all necessities of everyday living. Therefore, a 50 cent charge for the State I.D. card is a sensible solution to the preservation of their voting rights. If they do not have this card, they must find someone who lives in their precinct who knows them and will vouch for them. This is a very clumsy arrangement and presumes wholly on the goodwill of a neighbor. The alternative is to forgo the necessities of living.

Fifty cents is an appropriate fee and this group of handicapped persons should not pay more than other handicapped persons.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota urges the passage of SF660.

Second the system here at the Capitol is open to all. Likely, no government in the nation is as accessible as ours. Citizens may provide input at hearings like the one today, call legislators, write letters and take advantage of legislators' visits to their districts in order to have their views known. In these many ways, citizens' concerns may be communicated to legislators and where appropriate, policy enactment or change can be initiated and subject to the legislative process.

The League also opposes the citizen-initiated amendment of the Constitution. The same arguments apply here as to creating legislative policy. Citizens have an opportunity to review legislative proposals for amendments just as we are doing today.

We note with interest that although the percentages of petitioners are higher for amendments than for simple statutes, the simple majority of those voting on the question is a reduction of the present majority of those voting in the election required for passage of an amendment. Do the proponents of this amendment want to endorse a smaller majority passage for initiative amendments as opposed to those initiated by the legislature?

As close observers of the legislative scene, the League of Women Voters does not see any reason for this kind of change in our public policy decision-making process. We believe that well informed and active citizens can and have chosen wisely the people who can and will devote time and energy to lawmaking in their behalf. We urge you to defeat this proposal.



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

April 7, 1994

Ms. Susan E. Propper
Assistant General Counsel
999 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20463

Dear Ms. Propper:

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota has worked for nearly 75 years to improve the accessibility of the right to vote for all citizens. As you may know, Minnesota enjoys the most open voter registration system in the country and we were delighted to support the National Voter Registration Act which we hoped would extend some of the same advantages to voters in the rest of the United States.

It is our belief that the mail voter registration form designed by the Federal Elections Commission works to limit rather than expand the accessibility to voting. Surely it is possible to design a more user-friendly form. In particular we object to:

1. complicated and confusing regulations which undermine the National Voter Registration Act;
2. the requirement that the applicant must attest to having read the brochure (This is a literacy test. We thought that went out with the poll tax and Jim Crow);
3. the design of the brochure which does not group all requirements for a particular state in one section;
4. no provision for reproduction of the brochure by states voter organization groups or concerned individuals;
5. inclusion of naturalization information, place of birth, gender, occupation, physical characteristics, marital status, none of which are relevant to voter registration.

We hope that these concerns can be addressed before any final national mail voter registration application is established and distributed.

Sincerely,

Kay Erickson
President

KE/rk



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE UNITED STATES

Witt

May 20, 1993

Dear League Leader,

CONGRATULATIONS!

The Motor Voter bill was signed into law by President Clinton today in a White House ceremony, and we were there.

The President cited the League of Women Voters as a "fighter for freedom" in applauding our efforts to bring The National Voter Registration Act to his desk. According to the President, it was "brave people working at the grassroots, impatient with an always imperfect democracy and dedicated to widening the circle of liberty to encompass more and more of our fellow citizens" who were responsible for the enactment of our "newest civil rights bill." He certainly was right about that.

Your activism in organizing citizens nationwide will result in the nearly 70 million Americans who are not registered to vote being empowered at the ballot box. All American are winners today.

The Board of directors is inspired by your commitment and dedication. It is our hope to be able to duplicate at the national level the quality of your leadership throughout the country.

Sincerely,

Becky Cain
President

President

Becky Cain
St. Albans, West Virginia

Vice-Presidents

Diane B. Sheridan
Taylor Lake Village, Texas

Peggy Lucas
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Secretary-Treasurer

Robin Seaborn
St. Petersburg, Florida

Directors

Pat Brady
Springfield, Virginia

Marilyn F. Brill
Danville, Pennsylvania

Jane S. Garbacz
Wilton, Connecticut

Bobbie E. Hill
Camden, Arkansas

Debbie Macon
West Bloomfield, Michigan

Beverly K. McKinnell
St. Paul, Minnesota

Linda Moscarella
Taos, New Mexico

Nancy Pearson
Tacoma, Washington

Carole Wagner Vallianos
Manhattan Beach,
California

Kathleen Weisenberg
Atherton, California

Executive Director

Gracia M. Hillman



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

May 17, 1993

St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch
345 Cedar Street
St. Paul MN 55101

To the Editor:

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota would like to thank Senator Durenberger and Senator Wellstone for their support of national voter registration reform.

Although not a member of the conference committee considering motor voter legislation, Senator Durenberger worked very hard to bring about a compromise so that meaningful voter registration reform will now become a reality.

While we in Minnesota already enjoy some of the most progressive voter registration regulations in the country, the right to vote has been unnecessarily difficult to exercise in many states.

The new legislation will make it possible to get registration materials at many public service agencies (as well as driver license bureaus) and will protect applicants against coercion. We salute Senators Durenberger and Wellstone for their service to a more open and inclusive voter registration policy for the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Kay Erickson'.

Kay Erickson
President

KE/nw



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

M I N N E S O T A

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 17, 1998

The Honorable Joan Growe
Minnesota Secretary of State
Room 180
State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Ms. Growe:

The League of Women Voters has a long standing record of supporting fair voting practices that make it easier for citizens to exercise their right to vote. Therefore, we strongly support SF 2148 which allows for expanded absentee voting. Allowing voters to vote by absentee ballot for any reason is a sound practice and one whose time has come in today's busy society. This bill doesn't change the administration of absentee balloting. Concerns that blocked passage of a similar bill last year have all been addressed, and the League would like to see this bill become law.

Your innovative leadership and watchful administration of the elections process have not only brought about positive changes in the law, but have put into place policies that guard against the election fraud that we see in other states. Minnesota elections traditionally have a high voter turnout and few cases of fraud. We have led the way among states in many areas of democracy, namely election laws such as the "motor-voter" registration, and same day registration. All Minnesotans can be proud of this record.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota commends your effort to make voting more accessible and convenient to the citizens and we support passage of Senate File 2148, expanding absentee voting.

Sincerely,

Judy Duffy
President

cc - Members Minnesota House of Representatives



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

Testimony before the Senate Election Laws Committee

February 11, 1998

Testimony by Susan Weisbrod, Government Lobbyist

My name is Susan Weisbrod, and I am representing the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. I am here as a volunteer because I believe in good government and I believe Minnesota has and continues to lead the way in this area. The League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) supports SF3071, which calls for the disclosure of conduit funds.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) has been working on legislation for improved campaign practices for over 36 years. In 1961, the LWVMN formulated a position in support of:

"the public's right to comprehensive disclosure of all political campaign contributions and expenditures: mandatory, timely, uniform and complete reports of campaign contributions and expenditures should be made to a central authority responsible for disseminating such information to the public; responsibility for reporting contributions to the candidate's campaign and for reporting expenditures by the candidate and those made on the candidate's behalf rests squarely on the candidate; penalties should be stringent enough to ensure compliance by candidates."

These positions fit into a League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) statement calling for "action to improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process."

We acknowledge the role of conduit funds because their existence encourages citizen participation by facilitating individual contributions to the candidate of the employee's choice. We believe that since conduit funds exist within a corporation primarily to make it easier for an employee to set aside money to contribute to a candidate, then there should be no opposition to disclosing the total amount contributed to a candidate through the conduit fund. Knowing which corporations have these funds and disclosing the amount of money which passes through them should serve as beneficial public relations for the corporations.

In keeping with the comprehensive disclosure laws which exist in Minnesota now, the corporations and organizations which operate these employee conduits should disclose the amount of money which passes through the fund. Yes, these are individual contributions we are talking about, but because they reach the candidate by way of a check from the corporation, we would like to see these amounts reflected as coming through a conduit fund. The public does have a right to know which corporations and organizations have employee conduit funds and the aggregate amount contributed through the fund. I, as a citizen, as a voter, as someone who has a genuine concern for good government issues have a right to know: which groups have conduit funds and how much money passes through them? We urge you to support this bill.

Thank you for allowing the League (LWVMN) to testify before you today.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA
550 RICE STREET, ST. PAUL, MN 55103
612/224-5445 FAX 612/292-9417
E-MAIL: lwvmn@freenet.msp.mn.us
<http://freenet.msp.mn.us/ip/pol/lwvmn>

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: 3/3/97
TO: Minnesota House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and
Elections Committee
FROM: Anne Borgen, President
Susan Weisbrod, Government Issues Lobbyist
RE: HF 78

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota supports the informed and active participation of citizens in government and therefore, policies which encourage the public to follow issues and to vote.

The League believes that changing the name to the State Party Nominating Election clarifies the purpose of this election for the general public. It is our experience at the League office that many voters do not understand why they can vote only for candidates of one party in the primary.

We also support the proposed earlier primary election date as a good faith effort to improve voter turnout and to increase substantive discussion among the final candidates of all parties in the months before the general election. In 1998 there are only seven weeks between the currently scheduled primary and the general election. That is not much time to change the tenor of the campaign from the internal struggle for party nomination to the discussion of issues between the parties.

If this effort does not, in fact, improve participation or the discussion of issues between parties, we can return to the later primary date.



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 22, 1996

The Honorable Arne Carlson
Governor of Minnesota
130 Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Carlson:

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota wishes to express its support for voting by mail in special elections as proposed in Senate File 247.

The League of Women Voters' mission is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. We believe that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote. Furthermore, we support improvements in election laws regulating election procedures and voting.

We support Senate File 247 for the increased accessibility to the voting process it provides in elections with traditionally low voter response. We have been encouraged by the experiences in Minnesota where voting by mail has been used that it has resulted in a significantly higher turnout. Because citizens may miss the publicity surrounding special election dates, or may not find the polling place convenient when voting for only one office, we believe that this is a particularly important election to provide voting by mail to everyone.

The additional provision to regularize the voting day will further call attention to this important act of citizenship. We are also pleased that experience has proven a reduction in cost per vote as well. At the same time, we believe it is important in any vote by mail plan to continue to offer voters the option of personally delivering their ballots.

The League will be observing the implementation of voting by mail in special elections; we trust that there will be reasonable procedural safeguards to protect the integrity of the process while making voting more accessible to all Minnesotans. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anne Borgen, President
President

AB/mm



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 1, 1996
TO: Senate Ethics and Campaign Reform Committee
FROM: Anne Borgen, President
RE: Senate File 247

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota wishes to express its support for voting by mail in special elections as proposed in Senate File 247.

The League of Women Voters' mission is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. We believe that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote. Furthermore, we support improvements in election laws regulating election procedures and voting.

We support Senate File 247 for the increased accessibility to the voting process it provides in elections with traditionally low voter response. We have been encouraged by the experiences in Minnesota where voting by mail has been used that it has resulted in a significantly higher turnout. Because citizens may miss the publicity surrounding special election dates, or may not find the polling place convenient when voting for only one office, we believe that this is a particularly important election to provide voting by mail to everyone.

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The League will be observing the implementation of voting by mail in special elections; we trust that there will be reasonable procedural safeguards to protect the integrity of the process while making voting more accessible to all Minnesotans.

my



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

January 25, 1996

Dear Representative Greiling and Members of the House of Representatives:

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota wishes to express our support for voting by mail in special elections as proposed in House File 220.

The League of Women Voters' mission is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. We believe that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote. Furthermore, we support improvements in election laws regulating election procedures and voting.

We support House File 220 for the increased accessibility to the voting process it provides in elections with traditionally low voter response. We have been encouraged by the experiences in Minnesota where voting by mail has been used that it has resulted in a significantly higher turnout. Because citizens may miss the publicity surrounding special election dates, or may not find the polling place convenient when voting for only one office, we believe that this is a particularly important election to provide voting by mail to everyone.

The additional provision to regularize the voting day will further call attention to this important act of citizenship. We are also pleased that experience has proven a reduction in cost per vote as well. At the same time, we believe it is important in any vote by mail plan to continue to offer voters the option of personally delivering their ballot.

The League will be observing the implementation of voting by mail in special elections; we trust that there will be reasonable procedural safeguards to protect the integrity of the process while making voting more accessible to all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Anne Borgen
President

ACTION



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS
MINNESOTA

550 Rice Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103
Phone 612-224-5445
Fax 612-292-9417

TO: LWV's in Second, Sixth and Seventh Congressional Districts

FROM: Susan Simmonds, Vice President/Action

RE: Term Limits

DATE: March 23, 1995

1919

A VOICE

FOR CITIZENS,

A FORCE

FOR CHANGE

1994

Please call and then FAX a letter to your Congressman to voice strong opposition to Congressional term limits. LWVUS has been visiting with aides to Congressmen David Minge, District 2, Bill Luther, District 6, and Collin Peterson, District 7, and they all express support of term limit legislation, scheduled for vote in the House on March 27, 1995.

Minge campaigned with a promise to pass a term limits constitutional amendment; Luther is tending towards support of a 12-year House term, not retroactive. Peterson has signed on as a cosponsor to Van Hilleary's H.R.76 which advocates a 12-year limit but allows states to set stricter limits. We believe each of these Congressmen will be open to hearing good arguments in opposition to term limits from constituents. Please contact them immediately.

LWVUS Position:such limits would adversely affect the accountability, representativeness and effective performance of Congress, and by decreasing the power of Congress, would upset the balance of power between Congress and an already powerful presidency.

LWV opposes term limits because they are a panacea and not a real solution for complex campaign and election practices. They are a distraction from real campaign reform: reduction of campaign spending limits; limiting large campaign contributions; encouraging grassroots and issue-oriented campaigns.

LWV advocates voter participation and term limits would restrict an open process at the polls. Artificial term limits would betray popular consent and majority rule; term limits are not supportive of democratic principles, traditions and institutions.

Accountability: Office holders should be accountable to constituents in a representative government and we need competitive elections with large numbers of qualified candidates, including experienced incumbents.

Effectiveness: The Congress would be comprised of many neophytes and trainees and the institution would regularly be stripped of experience, institutional memory, mentoring, wisdom and judgment. Government today is big business, and what successful business would allow major decisions to be made only by persons with 12 years or less of experience? In today's world we need well-conceived, long-term policies, patience and continuity. Staff and lobbyists would (by default and by experience) be "in charge," of the complicated business of governing today.

Balance of Powers: With the power of the veto and of appointments, the office of the Presidency needs to be balanced with a strong legislative branch. We need grassroots-elected members of our community to speak for us in a diverse ethnic, economic and geographic nation.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

Testimony before the Senate Ethics Committee
by Diane Gibson
League of Women Voters of Minnesota
March 16, 1995

My name is Diane Gibson and I am a volunteer lobbyist for the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. I thank you for the opportunity to discuss with the League's position on S.F. 590.

The League of Women Voters has strong positions on facilitating informed citizen participation in the governmental process and the citizen's right to know. The League of Women Voters of Minnesota supports statewide voter guides to be mailed to every household in the state before the precinct caucus, the primary or "party nominating" election, and the general election.

In 1994 the League of Women Voters of Minnesota prepared 220,000 Voter Guides for the primary and 300,000 Voter Guides for the general election. We were assisted in their distribution by Target Stores. They were very well received by the voters we were able to reach but we are well aware that this is an imperfect method of distribution and a mailing to all households in the state is an essential component of voter education. The voters of Minnesota have shown a strong interest in nonpartisan and unbiased candidate information.

On the basis of our long history of voter education and contact with the voters at election time we would like to make the following recommendations:

1. The materials sent prior to the precinct caucus give very specific and user friendly instructions on how and where to participate in the caucus. Going to a caucus can be a very daunting experience for many citizens. Presently the Secretary of State publishes a very good guide to the caucus system but it suffers from imperfect distribution just as our voter guides do. A mailing to every household would be a significant improvement.
2. The primary election is another source of puzzlement to many citizens. In addition to informing voters that they may vote only for one party it will be especially important to inform them of changes that will occur with the addition of a third major party. Voters also need to know how and when the nonpartisan offices fit into the new scenario.
3. We would like to see candidate information include constitutional officers, national and state legislators and nonpartisan as well as partisan offices. Many nonpartisan elections generate as much need for information as partisan elections. For instance, voters have a particular interest in information on judicial candidates. Many say they do not vote for judges because they know nothing about them.

4. The voters are eager for information on the candidates stance on the issues. The grid that was published in our 1994 Voters Guide was much appreciated by the citizens who received a copy. We would hope that some method of unbiased, nonpartisan questioning could be addressed to candidates for inclusion in the Voters Guide. In our League experience both the subjects selected and the wording of the questions are the most challenging portions of putting a guide together.

It is our belief that an investment by the state in voter education which will stimulate citizen participation in the political process is a much needed and worthwhile expenditure. We encourage you to support S.F. 590. Thank you for your time and the League appreciates your attention to our positions.



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS
MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

Testimony presented to the
Senate Ethics and Campaign Reform Committee
Jane McWilliams, Lobbyist
February 28, 1995

I am Jane McWilliams, a volunteer advocate for the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. I thank the committee for the opportunity to discuss the League's views on SF 115.

The League is a nonpartisan, political grassroots organization that influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose candidates or political parties.

The president of the League, Kay Erickson, served on the Growe Commission, but because the League doesn't have positions on all the recommendations, we are not prepared to comment on all of them. I will refer to parts of SF 115 where we do have positions and I will make several comments on other aspects of the issue of low election turnout.

1. The League supports moving the precinct caucuses to April in the hope that milder weather will encourage attendance. We prefer keeping the caucuses on Tuesday, partly because this is the traditional voting day and partly to avoid the problems caused by interference with religious observations on the weekend.
2. We support a mail ballot for the Presidential Primary. We believe that this would increase voter participation and would serve as a way to test that theory with the possibility that the mail ballot system might be extended to other elections.
3. We support renaming and moving the primary from September to August. The name "Party Primary Election" may clarify the purpose of the election and help voters understand why they must request a ballot of one or another of the parties when they vote. We recognize that some will fear that summer vacations may interfere with participation in an August primary, but absentee voting is a viable option for those so affected. We believe that a longer general election campaign period will help voters sort out and become familiar with candidates. This benefit balances whatever inconvenience August vacationers may encounter.
4. We support distribution of caucus guides and voter guides for the primary and general elections by the Secretary of State. Concern has been raised elsewhere about what is included and what authority the state should have for editing information about candidates, but our long experience preparing voter guides gives us confidence that this needn't be a problem. It is the League's practice to use only the candidate's own words in its published voter guides - a word limit is set for responses to questions; there is no editing or rephrasing of candidate responses.

5. The voters are eager for information on the candidates stance on the issues. The grid that was published in our 1994 Voters Guide was much appreciated by the citizens that received a copy. We would hope that some method of unbiased, nonpartisan questioning could be addressed to candidates for inclusion in the voter guide.

On the basis of our long history of voter education and contact with the voters at election time, we would like to make the following recommendations:

1. The materials sent prior to the precinct caucus give very specific and user friendly instructions on how and where to participate in the caucus. This can be a very daunting experience for many citizens. Presently the Secretary of State publishes a very good guide to the caucus, but it suffers from imperfect distribution just as our voter guides do. A mailing to every household would be a significant improvement.
2. The primary election is another source of puzzlement to many citizens. It would be especially important to inform them of changes that will occur with the addition of a third major party, the need to vote for only one party, and the changes that may be made if the primary becomes the party nominating election.
3. We would like to see the candidate information include constitutional officers, national and state legislators and nonpartisan as well as partisan offices. Many nonpartisan elections generate as much need for information as partisan elections. For instance, voters have a particular interest in information on judicial candidates.
4. It has been our experience that one of the most difficult parts of publishing a voter guide has been the reluctance of candidates to return the information requested of them. You may wish to make the information return a necessary part of running for office.

The League has no position on other provisions in the bill.

The reasons for the decline in participation in elections, even here in Minnesota where we have some of the most open electoral processes in the nation, is a concern the League shares with the Growe Commission and the members of the committee. The reasons for the decline are complex, and there are no simple ways to restore a higher level of citizen involvement. Simplifying the nominating process should make it more attractive to the general public and increase participation. Practical last-minute information on voting is always needed. The League provides a "Hot Line" for thousands of voters in the metro area who call to ask questions about how to register and where to vote. This service would be equally valuable in other parts of the state, but our volunteer resources are limited. Could the state encourage or provide this service?

We have developed a precinct caucus curriculum and video which is widely used in schools, adult education, and new citizen groups. Could there be a partnership between the Secretary of State's Office and other organizations, including the League, to expand this service? What would it take to get the caucus training video into classrooms of 17 and 18-year olds statewide in order to empower and encourage young voters to participate in the nominating process?

The League believes that building citizen involvement takes education and restoring confidence that an individual counts. The League has developed a curriculum targeted for secondary students which teaches decision-making skills for citizenship. This is being used in many Minnesota schools and in other states as well. We're working on a similar program for elementary students.

In spite of our well-deserved reputation as a state with an open government, the public sometimes doesn't think an individual counts in the legislative or electoral process. To combat this problem, the League supported the ethics legislation passed last session as well as continued improvements in the public financing of campaigns. We believe the image of the Legislature has been polished by these measures, and we oppose any watering down of the ethics or campaign finance laws.

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the League's views on how we might improve the public's sense of their importance in the political process and the value of taking part in elections.

Testimony presented to the
Elections Division of the
House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs
and Elections Committee
Kay Erickson, President
February 16, 1995

I am Kay Erickson, President of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. I thank the committee for the opportunity to discuss the recommendations of the Growe Commission on Electoral Reform.

The League is a nonpartisan, political grassroots organization that influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose candidates or political parties.

The League was founded to increase citizen participation in government and shares the concern about the decline of participation in the political process outlined in the Commission's report. The 1991 Kettering Report, Citizens and Politics, tells us that citizens want to participate in politics, but say they are shut out of the political process. The feeling that citizens are losing their connection to their public officials and the political process runs deep. The reasons for this alienation are complex and there are no easy solutions, but we can make the process "user friendly" and easier to understand.

While the League neither supports nor opposes political parties, we strongly support measures that will facilitate and encourage participation. We support the current caucus/convention/primary process. The caucus provides access to the process at the grassroots level. The primary election serves as a check that candidates endorsed at party conventions have broad public support.

We support changing the current election schedule. With caucus participation at 2%, it's time to do something different. An April date would acknowledge the

reality of Minnesota weather and move the precinct caucuses out of the dead of winter and would be more conducive to participation. We also agree with the Commission's suggestion that the political parties develop caucuses that make it easier and more comfortable for people to express their views. An primary election in August would allow more time for voters to hear from the nominees of the various parties before the general election.

We would encourage the Legislature to discuss weekend dates with the religious community. Because for some groups religious observances are on a Saturday, some citizens would be excluded from participating in a Saturday election. We would prefer to hold the election on a Tuesday, which is our traditional voting day. Many people also plan vacations on August weekends which might decrease participation in the election.

We support renaming the primary the "party nominating election." In our experience, many voters do not understand that the primary is part of a party nominating process. Renaming the primary would provide an opportunity for education and may be less confusing. The Legislature will need to clarify how this decision will affect nonpartisan offices (for example, county sheriff, judges), maybe the "party nominating election and nonpartisan primary."

Whatever schedule is finally adopted, the League would encourage the Legislature to allow a minimum of six weeks between the last day to file for the primary and the primary election. From the League's perspective, it is very difficult to accumulate information on candidates and disseminate voter guides in six weeks; a shorter time frame would be almost impossible. Also, candidates need time to reach out to citizens beyond the convention delegates and voters need time to assess the candidates.

We applaud the Commission's recommendations for more voter information and education. A toll free number, precinct caucus video, and nonpartisan voter's

guides mailed to every household are all suggestions we support. The League receives thousands of phone calls during elections. We've had people tell us they try for hours to get through, so we know thousands of citizens do not get their questions answered by our hotline. We have a precinct caucus video and guide that is requested by schools and community groups. Whether it is the Secretary of State's office, the political parties or citizen groups like the League, there cannot be too much education.

Technology is rapidly increasing the flow of information. We encourage the legislature to take advantage of all the avenues available to provide education and information to the public. At the same time it is important to remember that technology is not yet available to all citizens. Touch tone phones, cable TV, and computers are economically out of reach for many citizens. If knowledge is power, we must make sure information is available to all our citizens so everyone can participate. Technology has the capability to isolate us in front of our computer screens or to provide opportunities for discussion and debate that will bring us together. In Minnesota we take pride in a political system that is far ahead of the rest of the country in being open and accessible. We encourage the Legislature to keep Minnesota a place where all citizens have access to accurate information.

When people know where to vote, when they know who the candidates are, when they understand how the caucus system works, they are more likely to participate. Supporting these educational activities sends the message that the political process is open to everyone and invites participation.

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to present the League's views and look forward to working with you to increase participation at all levels of the political process.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

February 28, 1994

Dear Members of the House Committee on General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections:

This letter is in response to the proposed uniform election law. The League of Women Voters of Minnesota is in support of legislation which would encourage more citizen participation in their government, at all levels. In Minnesota we have laws which allow same-day voter registration, a means of encouraging more voter participation. Access to the polls should be as open as possible. By moving school elections to November the greatest number of voters would be participating in choosing members of their communities to represent them regarding school district issues. Also, by combining elections taxpayer money would be saved which is now spent for special school board elections.

Americans in general are attuned to November as the month to go to the polls. -The percentage of those who vote in even-numbered years is higher than odd-numbered years, and so we believe that there would be more participation in deciding on elected school officials during a general election, and we would therefore support mandating elections during a general election and not leaving it as a local option.

There should be no exclusivity about school board elections. In fact, with so much school funding money coming from local property taxes, it seems only just that the local voters be given the greatest opportunity available to participate in deciding who will make decisions for their children's schools.

If more people participate in the selection of school board members there may be a greater participation of citizens in demanding accountability from those elected. All citizens of a community, not just those who would make a special effort to vote in the spring, will be held accountable for their choice of school board members, and they will be able to demand the same accountability from the school board to the community, knowing that they have taken an active part in their election.

Sincerely,

Susan Simmonds
Vice President - Action

SS/rk

MOTOR VOTER BILL

Contact: Celeste Levie

612/224-5445

Last week LWVUS phoned LWVMN directly to urge us to contact Senator Dave Durenberger regarding his key role in the passage of the National Voter Registration Act in the U.S. Senate. In turn, we are asking you to contact local League members requesting that they phone his office immediately. Senator Durenberger's phone number in Minnesota is: (612) 370-3382 or Toll Free 1-800-752-4226. In Washington D. C. the number is (202) 224-3244. Motor Voter will be brought to a vote in the full Senate the first week of March. So, please call the Senator now and ask him to vote for "cloture". To ensure passage of Motor Voter in the Senate, we now must work to block opposition attempts to derail or slow passage of the bill through a filibuster or killer amendments. The vote to block a filibuster is called "cloture," which requires 60 of the 100 Senate votes to pass. Sen. Durenberger is the 60th vote!

League has lobbied for many years on this legislation which would allow citizens to register to vote at state agencies and selected community institutions, for example, when applying for renewing or changing the address on their drivers' licenses (hence the name, Motor Voter). Mail-in and multi-agency voter registration are particularly important for Americans who are elderly, have disabilities or low incomes, and are often barred from registering because sites are not accessible to them.

BACKGROUND

- * In 1992 only 55% of the American electorate voted, but more than 85% of registered voters went to the polls.
- * States with the most convenient voter registration laws recorded the highest turnouts: Maine, Minnesota, Montana and Wisconsin. Minnesota, Maine and Wisconsin have same-day voter registration and Maine, Minnesota and Montana have motor voter programs.
- * 70 million Americans are not registered to vote. Only 25% of Americans with disabilities are registered; 33% of adults move within a two-year period and must re-register.
- * 90% of Americans would be reached by this broad-based community site registration process.
- * Large costs will not be imposed on states. Using deputy registrars costs between \$1 and \$15 per transaction; motor voter between \$.03 and \$.33 per transaction.
- * There may be some implementation costs but there will be federal assistance and postal rates are cut for mailings by election officials.
- * There are built-in safeguards against fraud: registrants must attest to the fact that they qualify under penalty of perjury, and there is a mandatory address verification provision.
- * Sixty-five national organizations including the Catholic Conference, the NAACP, the Disabled American Veterans and the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) are part of the LWV coalition.
- * Minnesota has some of the most voter-friendly registration regulations in the country; it works! We know!
- * Washington Post columnist David Broder's article in the Star Tribune offered lukewarm support for the bill. Our job is to refute his tepid endorsement and to let Senator Durenberger, the most important Senator to convince to assure passage, that Motor Voter enfranchises all Americans, a basic tenet of LWV!!

COLLIN C. PETERSON
7TH DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2307

February 4, 1993

Ms. Nancy Witta
Legislative Coordinator
MN League of Women Voters
550 Rice Street
St. Paul, MN 55103

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
1133 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2307
(202) 225-2165

DISTRICT OFFICES:
LAKE AVENUE PLAZA BLDG.
714 LAKE AVENUE, STE. 107
DETROIT LAKES, MN 56501
(218) 847-5056

MIDTOWN SQUARE
3333 WEST DIVISION
ST. CLOUD, MN 56301
(612) 259-0559

MINNESOTA WHEAT GROWERS BLDG.
2603 WHEAT DRIVE
RED LAKE FALLS, MN 56750
(218) 253-4356

FEB 10 1993

Dear Ms. Witta:

Thank you for phoning my office to express your support of H.R. 2, the National Voter Registration Act. I appreciate hearing from you.

I am pleased to let you know that I am a cosponsor of this necessary legislation and will work for its passage. Please feel free to contact me in the future regarding other issues of importance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Collin C. Peterson".

Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress

CCP:cld



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 10, 1993

The Honorable Dave Durenberger
United States Senate
154 Russell Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Durenberger:

We are delighted that the Senate voted for cloture on the Motor Voter bill. Of course, we are especially grateful to you for your vote for cloture and for your support on this measure, which will make voter registration more accessible to millions of Americans.

Thank you very much for your help. We know we can count on your vote for final passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Kay Erickson'.

Kay Erickson
President

KE/cl

November 4, 1991

Primary Election Report

Attached is a report on the 1992 Presidential Primary, as of this date. There are, however, a couple of additional bits of information that might be useful.

1. During the last legislative session, LWVMN supported the 1992 Presidential Primary and a mail ballot. The funding for a mail ballot was not approved; therefore, a mail ballot will not occur.

2. Funding for the Presidential Primary is an issue that is being hotly debated. Cities and Counties are lobbying heavily to have the state fund the \$3-5.2 million that is being predicted as the cost of holding the election at the local level. (Mail balloting was predicted to cost \$2.5-3 million). Cities and counties are also asking that if the state will not pay for the state will not pay for the primary, the primary not be held at all in Minnesota.

3. There is a group of people who will try to repeal the primary law during the upcoming session of the legislature. However, the people that I talked to felt that the repeal movement did not have good support and would not prevail; should the legislature repeal the primary, it is thought that Governor Carlson would veto the repeal and that there would not be enough votes to override the repeal. They acknowledged that funding is a problem and stated that there will be a strong effort to get the state to pick up more of the cost of the election.

LWVMN Program for Action, 1990-1991 states on page 11
"Government: Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making;..."

It is my recommendation that LWVMN support the 1992 Presidential Primary election and adequate funding for the election by the state. LWV encourages and promotes voter participation. In a non-presidential election year (1990), only 4% of registered voters participated in their precinct caucuses. Approximately 23% of registered voters participated in the primary election that followed. While there are many reasons for non-participation in the existing caucus system, it is apparent that people were more comfortable expressing their views on candidate selection through the primary ballot. To increase voter participation in the selection of presidential candidates, LWVMN should support the system that people seem to be most comfortable with.

We should also evaluate the results of voter turn-out for the presidential primary and reevaluate our support of the primary after it has been tried in 1992.

November 4, 1991

1992 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

Q. When is the 1992 Presidential Primary being held?

A. The 1992 Presidential Primary will be on April 7th, 1992.

Q. What is the 1992 Presidential Primary?

A. The Presidential Primary is an election "at which the voters of this state may express their preference among the candidates of the major political party of their choice, for the party's nomination to be president of the United States, or may vote for uncommitted delegates to the national party convention." (Chapter 207A.01)

A Presidential Primary has not been held in Minnesota for over 20 years. The delegates that go to the national conventions of political parties have been chosen in a process that has begun on the precinct caucus level. The Presidential Primary is intended to change that process. Delegates to the national conventions of major political parties will be apportioned according to the number of votes that a candidate receives in the primary election.

Q. How will it work?

A. "An individual seeking to vote at the presidential primary shall request the ballot of the party for whose candidates the individual wishes to vote...Before receiving a ballot, a voter shall sign the voter's certificate or duplicate registration file and shall place a check mark beside the name of the political party whose ballot the voter requested." (Chapter 207A.03 Subd. 2) You will then vote for the candidates of your choice on the ballot that you have chosen.

Q. Will Precinct Caucuses still be held?

A. Yes. Precinct Caucuses will be held on March 3, 1992 so that parties can deal with issues, create platforms, endorse other candidates, and elect representatives to the next level. Most representatives to political party national conventions start the process by attending their precinct caucus.

Q. How will the delegates to the National Conventions be selected?

- A. "Delegates to the national convention of each political party appearing on the presidential primary ballot must be chosen by the state convention or congressional district convention of that party." (Chapter 207A.06 Subd. 2)

With the Caucus system, people go to their precinct caucuses and are elected to the next level, often based on their stated support of a particular presidential candidate. At the next level, delegates are again chosen to go the next level up. This process continues until the final selection of delegates for the national convention of the political party occurs, usually at the state convention.

With the Presidential Primary, "delegates to the national convention of each political party appearing on the presidential primary ballot who are chosen on the basis of their support for particular presidential candidates must be apportioned among the various candidates of that party receiving votes in the presidential primary, in proportion of their respective vote totals." (Chapter 207A.06 Subd. 1) For instance, if a political party has been allotted 100 delegates from Minnesota to its national convention and 30% of that political party's votes were cast for candidate A, 20% of the votes were cast for candidate B, 40% were cast for candidate C, and 10% were cast as undecided votes; 30 delegates would go to the national convention in support of candidate A, 20% in support of candidate B, and so on.

Political parties will decide who will act as delegates to the national conventions at their congressional district or state conventions. The caucus, etc. system will still be used to select delegates, as long as they commit themselves to the candidates selected by the primary vote.

- Q. Will my vote be "binding" on the delegates?

- A. "At the national convention, delegates chosen because of their support for a presidential candidate shall vote for that candidate on the first ballot unless they have been released from that obligation by the candidate. This subdivision does not apply to delegates to the extent that it is inconsistent with the rules of the national party or state party." (Chapter 207A.06 Subd. 3)

Legally, delegates at national conventions can never bound to vote for the candidate that they were elected to vote for. The only thing binding delegates is their sense of honor and the knowledge that if they vote for a candidate they were not elected to vote for, they will never be elected as a delegate again. Since Minnesota delegates to national conventions are required to register the candidate that they were chosen to vote for and their votes will be a matter of public record, it is thought that public opinion and the delegate selection

process will prevent delegates from "switching" candidates at the national conventions if their national or state party rules allow them to do so.

The problem in Minnesota seems to be that the Democratic Party has stated that they will not even apportion delegates to the national convention based on the Primary Election results; the existing system of delegate selection, starting at the caucus level, will be used. To refuse to apportion delegates on the basis of the primary results would be a direct violation of Minnesota law and might be challenged in court

Q. Do I have to register to vote again?

A. If you are already registered to vote and that registration is valid, you do not have to register to vote again.

Q. Why must I register my party preference to vote in the presidential primary? Who has access to that information?

A. The Supreme Court has ruled that political parties and delegates cannot be bound in their votes at national conventions if primary voters are not required by the parties to register the party they are voting in. A primary election where voters are not required to register by party is called an "Open Primary" or a "Beauty Contest." Wisconsin has such a system. Iowa, and most other states that use the primary system for the selection of delegates to national conventions, require party registration so that the votes of the public will be binding on the delegates.

"a person entitled to inspect the duplicate registration file or receive a copy of a current precinct list under section 201.091 must also be informed of the party choice of any voter who voted in the most recent presidential primary under this chapter." (Chapter 207A.07)

The information on party registration will be attached to voter registration information and be a part of the public record in the same way that your voter registration is now. Your choice of a party in this election does not bind you to vote in that same political party in any future primary elections; for each election you are free to choose which party to vote with. Use of those records is limited to legitimate political activity and for specified and limited purposes of law enforcement. The records can be totally withheld if a court order for protection is in force.

Q. Will my ballot be secret?

A. Yes, your ballot will be secret. While the party you vote for will be public, the candidate you vote for will remain secret.

Q. How and when do candidates file to be on the Primary ballot?

A. Candidates may file from December 17, 1991 to December 31, 1991. A candidate can also be drafted by a petition drive until January 28, 1992. The petitions must contain at least 1,000 signatures of eligible voters from each and every congressional district in Minnesota. Only major parties are eligible to be on the primary ballot. If a voter chooses to write in a candidate or vote "uncommitted," those votes will count as well.

Q. Will the 1992 Presidential Primary proceed as planned?

A. There is a move within the legislature to repeal the Primary law, but it is thought that the move is not strong. If repeal should occur, it is thought that the Governor might veto the repeal.

The Republican Party has stated that they will abide by the law. The Democratic party has stated that they will not apportion delegates on the basis of the primary votes cast. The caucus system will prevail.

CHAPTER 207A PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

207A.01 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY.

A presidential primary must be held on the first Tuesday in April of each year in which a president and vice president of the United States are to be nominated and elected, at which the voters of this state may express their preference among the candidates of the major political party of their choice, for that party's nomination to be president of the United States, or may vote for uncommitted delegates to the national party convention. For the purposes of sections 207A.01 to 207A.07, "political party" or "party" means a political party as defined in section 200.02, subdivision 7.

History: [1989 c 291 art 2 s 1; 1990 c 603 s 4]

207A.02 CANDIDATES ON BALLOT.

Subdivision 1. Required listing. The following individuals must be listed as candidates on the appropriate major political party presidential ballot with a separate ballot for each major political party:

(1) any individual who files an affidavit of candidacy pursuant to section 204B.06 and submits the appropriate filing fee or petition in place of filing fee pursuant to section 204B.11; and

(2) any individual nominated as a candidate for the presidential nomination of a political party by a petition submitted not later than ten weeks before the primary and bearing the names of 1,000 eligible voters from each congressional district.

In addition, each major political party's ballot must contain a place for a voter to indicate a preference for having delegates to the party's national convention remain uncommitted, and a blank line printed below the other choices on the ballot so that a voter may write in the name of a person who is not listed on the ballot.

Subd. 1a. Time for filing; fee. The period for filing an affidavit of candidacy for the presidential primary must begin 16 weeks before the primary and end 14 weeks before the primary. The filing fee is \$500. The period for signing nominating petitions must begin 16 weeks before the primary and end ten weeks before the primary.

Subd. 2. Announcing candidates. Candidates who have filed an affidavit of candidacy pursuant to subdivision 1, clause (1), for each political party on the presidential primary ballot must be announced by the secretary of state the day after filings close for the purpose of giving voters sufficient time to nominate other candidates by petition.

Subd. 3. Announcement. The determination of which candidates must be listed on the presidential primary ballot must be made by the secretary of state not later than eight weeks before the presidential primary. The secretary of state shall certify to the county auditor of each county the names of all candidates in the presidential primary at least seven weeks before the primary.

Subd. 4. Notification. Not later than three days after the last day for filing a nominating petition pursuant to subdivision 1, clause (2), the secretary of state shall notify each individual whose name is to be listed on the presidential primary ballot that the individual's name will be listed unless the individual submits an affidavit stating that the individual is not a candidate for the presidential nomination, does not intend to become a candidate, and would not accept the nomination. The affidavit must be submitted to and received by the secretary of state no later than eight weeks before the presidential primary.

History: [1989 c 291 art 2 s 2; 1990 c 603 s 5]

MINNESOTA ELECTION LAWS — 1987

207A.03 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY; HOW CONDUCTED.

Subdivision 1. **General rule.** Except as otherwise provided in sections 207A.01 to 207A.07, the presidential primary must be conducted, and the results canvassed and returned in the manner provided by law for the state primary. If a municipality which uses lever voting machines or an electronic voting system determines that the use of the machines or voting system would not be practical in the presidential primary, the municipality may use a paper ballot for the presidential primary.

Subd. 2. **Voter certification; ballot.** An individual seeking to vote at the presidential primary shall request the ballot of the party for whose candidates the individual wishes to vote. The voter registration certificate or duplicate registration file for the presidential primary must list the names of the political parties appearing on the ballot at the presidential primary. Before receiving a ballot, a voter shall sign the voter's certificate or duplicate registration file and shall place a check mark beside the name of the political party whose ballot the voter requested.

History: [1989 c 291 art 2 s 3; 1990 c 603 s 6]

207A.04 AUDITOR FURNISHED INFORMATION BY SECRETARY OF STATE; BALLOT PREPARATION.

Subdivision 1. **Notice of filing period.** Twenty weeks before a presidential primary is to be held, the secretary of state shall provide notice to the county auditor of each county of the date of the presidential primary. Within ten days after notification by the secretary of state, each county auditor shall provide notice of the date of the presidential primary to each municipal clerk in the county.

Subd. 2. **Notice of primary.** At least 15 days before the date of the presidential primary, each municipal clerk shall post a public notice stating the date of the presidential primary, the location of each polling place in the municipality, and the hours during which the polling places in the municipality will be open. The county auditor shall post a similar notice in the auditor's office with information for any polling places in unorganized territory in the county. The governing body of a municipality or county may publish the notice in addition to posting it. Failure to give notice does not invalidate the election.

Subd. 3. **Ballot preparation.** The secretary of state shall prepare paper ballots, absentee ballot envelopes, ballot return envelopes, election return envelopes, and summary statements for use in the presidential primary. The ballots must be printed on white paper with a separate ballot for the names of the candidates of each political party.

History: [1989 c 291 art 2 s 4; 1990 c 603 s 7]

207A.05 [Repealed, 1990 c 603 s 12]

207A.06 SELECTION OF DELEGATES; NATIONAL CONVENTION BALLOTING.

Subdivision 1. **Apportionment of votes.** The delegates to the national convention of each political party appearing on the presidential primary ballot who are chosen on the basis of their support for particular presidential candidates must be apportioned among the various candidates of that party receiving votes in the presidential primary, in proportion to their respective vote totals.

The secretary of state shall certify to the state chairperson of each political party appearing on the presidential primary ballot the number of delegates to which each presidential candidate is entitled.

Subd. 2. **Chosen delegates.** Delegates to the national convention of each political party appearing on the presidential primary ballot must be chosen by the state convention or congressional district convention of that party, except as otherwise provided in this subdivision. The secretary of each party's state convention or congressional district convention shall promptly notify the secretary of state of the names of the delegates to the national convention chosen as supporters of each presidential candidate.

MINNESOTA ELECTION LAWS — 1987

Subd. 3. **Delegate votes.** At the national convention, delegates chosen because of their support for a presidential candidate shall vote for that candidate on the first ballot unless they have been released from that obligation by the candidate. This subdivision does not apply to delegates to the extent that it is inconsistent with the rules of the national party or state party.

History: [1989 c 291 art 2 s 6; 1990 c 603 s 8]

207A.07 USE OF VOTING MACHINES.

The county auditor of each county in which lever voting machines or electronic voting systems are used shall provide all ballots, ballot labels, ballot cards, and other necessary printed forms and supplies needed to place the ballots required by sections 207A.01 to 207A.07 on the voting machines which otherwise are provided by the state when paper ballots are used. The total cost of printing and providing the forms must be paid by the state.

History: [1989 c 291 art 2 s 7]

207A.08 INFORMATION ON PARTY CHOICE.

Notwithstanding section 204C.18, subdivision 1, or other law to the contrary, a person entitled to inspect the duplicate registration file or receive a copy of a current precinct list under section 201.091, must also be informed of the party choice of any voter who voted in the most recent presidential primary under this chapter.

History: [1990 c 603 s 9]

207A.09 RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.

The secretary of state shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this chapter as follows:

- (1) to implement section 207A.08;
- (2) to determine a method for verifying the signatures on nominating petitions and petitions in place of filing fees for the presidential primary;
- (3) to determine the format of the presidential primary ballots; and
- (4) to determine the manner of paying or reimbursing the costs to the counties of conducting the presidential primary.

History: [1990 c 603 s 10]

Testimony before the Senate Election Committee
by Celeste Levie, LWVMN Lobbyist
January 8, 1992

I come before you on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) to respond to the bills before you today that seek to repeal and/or delay the 1992 Presidential Primary in Minnesota.

As you know, the League of Women Voters has been diligent in its efforts to increase informed voter participation in government. We hold elections to create that government, and political parties are a part of the system we use to hold elections. In 1988, our last presidential election year, only 9% of Minnesota's registered voters participated in their precinct caucuses.

LWVMN supports the addition of a presidential primary to the caucus system with the hope that there will be a significant increase in the participation of Minnesota's citizens in the selection of presidential candidates. And, LWVMN strongly agrees that the state should adequately fund the election so that local units of government and their ability to raise funds are not unduly burdened by a statewide electoral process. While LWVMN recognizes that the State of Minnesota is in a time of budgetary restraint, we also recognize that democracy costs money. Since democracy is the overriding priority of the electoral process, we do not see the cost of an election as a reason to delay or cancel the election.

LWVMN would also like to see the possibility of the presidential primary being held by statewide mail ballot. This would be a good time to test the viability of such a system, verify the successful increase in voter participation reported by states that use mail balloting, and discover any problems that could exist with such a system.

It is LWVMN's hope that the Minnesota Legislature will join us in encouraging increased participation in the presidential selection process by voting to keep the 1992 presidential primary and by funding it so that local governments will not have to carry the burden of necessary costs alone. LWVMN also hopes that the political parties will join us in encouraging increased voter participation by apportioning their delegates based on the results of the primary. People need to know what their votes count. We cannot bemoan the fact that people do not vote and then discount their votes. We need to help democracy work by instituting whatever form of democracy will attract the greatest and broadest base of participation.

New

COMMITTEE MEETING NOTICE

TO: HOUSE INFORMATION, 175 STATE OFFICE BUILDING
MATT NIEWOHNER

FROM: BERNADINE HYSER.
Committee Legislative Assistant

PHONE: 296-5489

COMMITTEE: GENERAL LEGISLATION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, &
ELECTIONS

DIVISION: _____

SUBCOMMITTEE: _____

CHAIR: Rep. WALLY SPARBY

DAY & DATE: March 1, 1993

TIME: 12:30 pm

MEETING ROOM: 300N State Office Building

AGENDA:

HF 253 (Lasley) *passed out of com on 3/1/93*
HF 271 (Lasley) - *sent over to when Sparby returns*
HF 377 (Bergson) - *didn't get to on 3/1/93*

Comm. meets again on 3/8/93

Celeste will cover-

Introduced by Lasley, Long, Osthoff, Bergson and Abrams

H.F. No. 253

February 9, 1993

Companion S.F. No. ____

Referred to the Committee on GENERAL LEGISLATION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND ELECTIONS.

A bill for an act

relating to elections; providing for a presidential primary by mail; changing the date of the presidential primary; increasing the filing fee for an affidavit of candidacy; changing certain duties and procedures; amending Minnesota Statutes 1992, sections 204B.45, subdivision 3, and by adding a subdivision; 207A.01; 207A.02, subdivision 1a; 207A.03; 207A.04, subdivision 3; 207A.06, subdivision 2; 207A.08; and 207A.09; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 207A; repealing Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 207A.07.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 204B.45, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 1b. [PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY.] The secretary of state shall conduct the presidential primary by mail, in the manner provided in this section, to the extent practicable, and chapter 207A.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 204B.45, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

Subd. 3. [ELECTION LAW APPLIED; RULES.] The Minnesota election law is applicable to mail balloting except as provided by this section or by rules adopted by the secretary of state ~~but-only-paper-ballots-may-be-used~~. The secretary of state shall adopt rules for the conduct of mail balloting, including instructions to voters, procedures for challenge of voters, public observation of the counting of ballots, and procedures for proper handling and safeguarding of ballots to ensure the

1 integrity of the election.

2 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 207A.01, is
3 amended to read:

4 207A.01 [PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY.]

5 A presidential primary must be held on the first last
6 ~~Tuesday in April~~ February of each year in which a president and
7 vice president of the United States are to be nominated and
8 elected, at which the voters of this state may express their
9 preference among the candidates of the major political party of
10 their choice, for that party's nomination to be president of the
11 United States or may vote for uncommitted delegates to the
12 national party convention. For the purposes of sections 207A.01
13 ~~to 207A.07~~ 207A.09, "political party" or "party" means a
14 political party as defined in section 200.02, subdivision 7.

15 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 207A.02,
16 subdivision 1a, is amended to read:

17 Subd. 1a. [TIME FOR FILING; FEE.] The period for filing an
18 affidavit of candidacy for the presidential primary must begin
19 16 weeks before the primary and end 14 weeks before the
20 primary. The filing fee is \$500 \$1,000. The period for signing
21 nominating petitions must begin 16 weeks before the primary and
22 end ten weeks before the primary.

23 Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 207A.03, is
24 amended to read:

25 207A.03 [PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY; HOW CONDUCTED.]

26 Subdivision 1. [GENERAL RULE.] Except as otherwise
27 provided in sections 207A.01 to ~~207A.07~~ 207A.09, the
28 presidential primary must be conducted, and the results
29 canvassed and returned in the manner provided by law for the
30 state primary. ~~If a municipality which uses lever voting~~
31 ~~machines or an electronic voting system determines that the use~~
32 ~~of the machines or voting system would not be practical in the~~
33 ~~presidential primary, the municipality may use a paper ballot~~
34 ~~for the presidential primary.~~

35 Subd. 2. [VOTER CERTIFICATION; BALLOT.] An individual
36 seeking to vote at the presidential primary shall request choose

1 the ballot of the party for whose candidates the individual
 2 wishes to vote and must indicate this choice on the mail voter's
 3 certificate. ~~The voter registration certificate~~ ^{SHS} ~~registration file for the presidential~~ ^{When} ~~names of the political parties appear~~ ^{Do we} ~~presidential primary.~~ ^{need this?} ~~Before receiving~~ ^{SS} ~~sign the voter's certificate or duplicate~~ ~~registration file and~~
 8 ~~shall place a check mark beside the name of the political party~~
 9 ~~whose ballot the voter requested.~~

10 Subd. 3. [PROCEDURES.] At least 14 days before the
 11 presidential primary, the secretary of state shall mail ballots
 12 to each person registered to vote on the 21st day before the
 13 presidential primary, except that no ballot may be mailed to a
 14 challenged voter. Voted ballots may be returned to either the
 15 secretary of state or the county auditor no later than 8:00 p.m.
 16 on the day of the presidential primary. The secretary of state
 17 may begin processing and counting ballots immediately as the
 18 ballots are received from the voters, except that no vote totals
 19 or other election results may be disclosed until 8:00 p.m. on
 20 the day of the presidential primary.

21 Subd. 4. [COUNTY AUDITOR'S DUTIES.] Each county auditor
 22 shall designate one or more places for voters to deliver their
 23 voted ballots, to return spoiled ballots, to obtain assistance
 24 in marking the ballots, and to register and vote on election
 25 day. The county auditor shall appoint a sufficient number of
 26 election judges to perform duties related to the administration
 27 of the presidential primary. At the conclusion of voting, the
 28 county auditor shall count all ballots delivered to the auditor
 29 and report them immediately to the secretary of state.

30 Subd. 5. [COSTS.] The secretary of state shall pay the
 31 costs related to the conduct of the presidential primary. The
 32 county auditor shall document costs incurred by the county and
 33 shall report these costs in the manner provided by the secretary
 34 of state. The secretary of state shall reimburse the county for
 35 the costs incurred in the administration of the presidential
 36 primary.

1 the ballot of the party for whose candidates the individual
2 wishes to vote and must indicate this choice on the mail voter's
3 certificate. The-voter-registration-certificate-or-duplicate
4 registration-file-for-the-presidential-primary-must-list-the
5 names-of-the-political-parties-appearing-on-the-ballot-at-the
6 presidential-primary.--Before-receiving-a-ballot,-a-voter-shall
7 sign-the-voter's-certificate-or-duplicate-registration-file-and
8 shall-place-a-check-mark-beside-the-name-of-the-political-party
9 whose-ballot-the-voter-requested-

10 Subd. 3. [PROCEDURES.] At least 14 days before the
11 presidential primary, the secretary of state shall mail ballots
12 to each person registered to vote on the 21st day before the
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14 challenged voter. Voted ballots may be returned to either the
15 secretary of state or the county auditor no later than 8:00 p.m.
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26 election judges to perform duties related to the administration
27 of the presidential primary. At the conclusion of voting, the
28 county auditor shall count all ballots delivered to the auditor
29 and report them immediately to the secretary of state.

30 Subd. 5. [COSTS.] The secretary of state shall pay the
31 costs related to the conduct of the presidential primary. The
32 county auditor shall document costs incurred by the county and
33 shall report these costs in the manner provided by the secretary
34 of state. The secretary of state shall reimburse the county for
35 the costs incurred in the administration of the presidential
36 primary.

1 Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 207A.04,
2 subdivision 3, is amended to read:

3 Subd. 3. [~~BALLOT-PREPARATION~~ DUTIES OF SECRETARY OF
4 STATE.] The secretary of state shall prepare paper mailing
5 enclosures, ballots, absentee-ballot-envelopes, ballot-return
6 envelopes, election-return-envelopes, and summary statements,
7 and other needed forms for use in the presidential primary. ~~The~~
8 ~~ballots must be printed on white paper with A separate ballot~~
9 must be prepared ~~for the names of the candidates of each~~
10 political party.

11 Sec. 7. [207A.05] [EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES.]

12 Subdivision 1. [PROCESSING VOTING MATERIALS.] The
13 secretary of state may authorize the use of computers and
14 related equipment for the processing of election materials and
15 the counting of ballots on an experimental basis.

16 Subd. 2. [FORMS.] The secretary of state may develop
17 special forms for mailing enclosures, ballots, and other printed
18 materials required for the presidential primary on an
19 experimental basis.

20 Subd. 3. [POLLING PLACES.] The secretary of state, in
21 cooperation with the county auditors, may designate experimental
22 polling places where voters from one or more counties may vote
23 in the presidential primary. Experimental voting procedures for
24 polling places established as provided in this section may be
25 used, as provided in the rules of the secretary of state. Any
26 costs incurred as a result of establishment of polling places
27 under this subdivision must be paid by the secretary of state.

28 Sec. 8. Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 207A.06,
29 subdivision 2, is amended to read:

30 Subd. 2. [CHOSEN DELEGATES.] Delegates to the national
31 convention of each political party appearing on the presidential
32 primary ballot must be chosen by the state convention or
33 congressional district convention of that party, except as
34 otherwise provided in this subdivision. The secretary of each
35 party's state convention or congressional district convention
36 shall promptly notify the secretary of state of the names of the

1 delegates to the national convention chosen ~~as supporters of~~
2 ~~each presidential candidate~~ and the names of the candidates to
3 which the delegates have been apportioned by July 1 of each year
4 in which a presidential primary is held.

5 Sec. 9. Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 207A.08, is
6 amended to read:

7 207A.08 [INFORMATION ON PARTY CHOICE.]

8 Notwithstanding section 204C.18, subdivision 1, or other
9 law to the contrary, ~~a person entitled to inspect the duplicate~~
10 ~~registration file or receive a copy of a current precinct the~~
11 public information list under section 201.09 must also be
12 ~~informed of~~ indicate the party choice of any voter who voted in
13 the most recent presidential primary under this chapter.

14 Sec. 10. Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 207A.09, is
15 amended to read:

16 207A.09 [RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.]

17 The secretary of state shall adopt rules ~~to implement the~~
18 ~~provisions of this chapter as follows:~~

19 (1) to implement ~~section~~ sections 207A.01 to 207A.08;

20 (2) to determine a method for verifying the signatures on
21 nominating petitions and petitions in place of filing fees for
22 the presidential primary;

23 (3) to determine the format of the presidential primary
24 ballots; and

25 (4) to determine the manner of paying or reimbursing the
26 costs to the counties of conducting the presidential primary.

27 Sec. 11. [REPEALER.]

28 Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 207A.07, is repealed.

Introduced by Lasley, Opatz, Hasskamp, McCollum and Seagren

H.F. No. 271

February 9, 1993

Companion S.F. No. ____

Referred to the Committee on GENERAL LEGISLATION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND ELECTIONS.

Committee
will meet again Monday 3/8/92

- 1 A bill for an act
- 2 relating to elections; providing for a voter
- 3 information program; appropriating money; amending
- 4 Minnesota Statutes 1992, sections 204B.27, by adding
- 5 subdivisions; and 211B.06, subdivision 2.
- 6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:
- 7 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 204B.27, is
- 8 amended by adding a subdivision to read:
- 9 Subd. 8. [VOTER'S GUIDE.] At least 21 days before every
- 10 state general election, the secretary of state shall mail a
- 11 voter's guide to every household in the state. The voter's
- 12 guide must include the following information:
- 13 (1) the name, address, telephone number, occupation, and
- 14 political party or political principle of each nominee for
- 15 partisan offices appearing on the presidential ballot and the
- 16 state general election ballot;
- 17 (2) biographical information on each nominee (if provided),
- 18 not to exceed 50 words;
- 19 (3) a statement from each nominee (if provided), not to
- 20 exceed 150 words;
- 21 (4) a statement from the state chair of each major
- 22 political party (if provided), not to exceed 300 words;
- 23 (5) a statement provided by the attorney general on the
- 24 purpose and effect of any proposed constitutional amendment;
- 25 (6) information on the procedures for voter registration;

1 (7) information on the procedures for voting by absentee
2 ballot;

3 (8) information on assistance available to persons with
4 disabilities; and

5 (9) other election-related information, as determined by
6 the secretary of state.

7 The secretary of state shall provide each person filing an
8 affidavit of candidacy for a partisan office with blank forms
9 and instructions to be used by the candidates to submit
10 information for the voter's guide. Candidates must submit
11 information for the voter's guide to the secretary of state no
12 later than six weeks before the state primary election. The
13 secretary of state may provide the candidates an opportunity to
14 review submitted material before publication.

15 The secretary of state may edit information submitted by
16 candidates to ensure compliance with this subdivision and to
17 delete any information which, in the opinion of the secretary of
18 state, contains obscene, profane, scandalous, or defamatory
19 language, or contains any language that may not be legally
20 circulated through the mails. Nothing in this section shall
21 make the author of the material submitted to the secretary of
22 state exempt from any civil or criminal action due to defamatory
23 statements made by the author. The person writing, signing, or
24 offering a statement to the secretary of state is deemed its
25 author and publisher.

26 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 204B.27, is
27 amended by adding a subdivision to read:

28 Subd. 9. [TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE LINE.] The secretary of
29 state shall provide a toll-free telephone line for use by
30 persons in Minnesota during the period beginning four weeks
31 before the state primary election and ending two weeks after the
32 state general election. The secretary of state shall make
33 available to the public information concerning voter
34 registration, absentee voting, election results, and other
35 election-related information considered by the secretary of
36 state to be useful to the public.

1 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 211B.06,
2 subdivision 2, is amended to read:

3 Subd. 2. [EXCEPTION.] Subdivision 1 does not apply to any
4 person or organization whose sole act is, in the normal course
5 of their business, the printing, manufacturing, or dissemination
6 of the false information, nor to the secretary of state during
7 the preparation and dissemination of the voter's guide provided
8 in section 204B.27, subdivision 8.

9 Sec. 4. [APPROPRIATION.]

10 \$..... is appropriated from the general fund to the
11 secretary of state to implement sections 1 and 2, to be
12 available until June 30, 1995.

Testimony before the House General Legislation Committee
by Beverly McKinnell, LWVMN President
January 9, 1992

I come before you on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) to testify in favor of Representative Solberg's bill, HF 1792, to provide state funding for the 1992 Presidential Primary in Minnesota.

As you know, the League of Women Voters has been diligent in its efforts to increase informed voter participation in government. We hold elections to create that government, and political parties are a part of the system we use to hold elections. In 1988, our last presidential election year, only 9% of Minnesota's registered voters participated in their precinct caucuses.

LWVMN supports the addition of a presidential primary to the caucus system with the hope that there will be a significant increase in the participation of Minnesota's citizens in the selection of presidential candidates. And, LWVMN strongly agrees that the state should adequately fund the election so that local units of government and their ability to raise funds are not unduly burdened by a statewide electoral process. While LWVMN recognizes that the State of Minnesota is in a time of budgetary restraint, we also recognize that democracy costs money. Since democracy is the overriding priority of the electoral process, we do not see the cost of an election as a reason to delay or cancel the election.

LWVMN would also like to see the possibility of the presidential primary being held by statewide mail ballot. This would be a good time to test the viability of such a system, verify the successful increase in voter participation reported by states that use mail balloting, and discover any problems that could exist with such a system.

It is LWVMN's hope that the Minnesota Legislature will join us in encouraging increased participation in the presidential selection process by voting to keep the 1992 presidential primary and by funding it so that local governments will not have to carry the burden of necessary costs alone. LWVMN urges the political parties to encourage increased voter participation by apportioning their delegates based on the results of the primary. People need to know what their votes count. We cannot bemoan the fact that people do not vote and then discount their votes. We need to help democracy work by instituting whatever form of democracy will attract the greatest and broadest base of participation.