



March 6, 2024

Chair & Senator Jim Carlson
Senate Elections Committee
c/o Beth Fraser, Committee Administrator
Room 1200, Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave W
St Paul, MN 55103

Re: Testimony in Support of SF 3878

Dear Chair Carlson and Members of the Senate Elections Committee,

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public. Together, we envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate, and where their government is both representative and responsive to the community's interests.

LWV Minnesota supports SF 3878, Allocation of Incarcerated Persons for Districting:

The League of Women Voters supports systems of government and districting that provide for representative and responsive government. The current practice of counting incarcerated persons in the place where they are incarcerated for the purposes of redistricting does not provide either a representative or responsive government for those individuals. Those who are incarcerated almost always come from some other place, and typically intend to return to the place where they lived before being incarcerated. The first effect of including incarcerated individuals where they are imprisoned is that the district population in that area is artificially inflated due to including people who generally cannot vote, are not part of the community, don't use community services and facilities, and do not have long term connections there. An elected representative for the area where the prison is located does not represent that person's home or the people, places, and services that incarcerated individuals will rely on once they are released.

The Census Bureau counts all persons, including those incarcerated, in the place where they are domiciled on the effective date of the Census. This information is used for the purposes of apportionment and redistricting, allocation of federal funds, and planning of services. Counting incarcerated people at their last address for the purposes of redistricting does not change the number of congressional representatives Minnesota will have, nor does it impact the receipt of federal funds or planning for government services. Funding from federal, state and local

governments are not impacted by changing where individuals are accounted for by redistricting. Given that prisons are large facilities in the communities where they exist, with substantial employment and requirements for local services, those services would not be impacted.

Counting incarcerated persons where they last resided for the purposes of redistricting ensures the interests of the incarcerated persons' actual home and community are being represented by the elected representatives. Changes in the counting of incarcerated persons for the purposes of redistricting have been adopted in at least fourteen states, including Montana, Colorado, and Virginia. SF 3878 ensures that the interests of all individuals will be represented in a balanced manner, with representation that knows and supports their community.

LWV Minnesota urges you to vote YES on SF 3878.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Huffman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Huffman, Election and Redistricting Policy Coordinator
League of Women Voters of Minnesota

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