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RE: Written Testimony on Elections Bill Relating to Peacetime Emergency

Dear Chair Dehn and Members of the Elections Subcommittee,

Thank you for your ongoing work to address the needs of Minnesotans during this unprecedented time. The American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota works to protect and expand Americans' freedom to vote. The ACLU-MN acknowledges and appreciates the urgency of many difficult issues facing the Legislature at this time. However, in a time of crisis, it is more critical than ever that the fundamental right to vote is protected.

The ACLU-MN recognizes that state and local officials face unprecedented challenges during this rapidly changing public health emergency, including in how to manage upcoming elections. State and local election officials must be prepared to revise longstanding election processes, minimize person-to-person contact, and ensure the integrity of the voting process. Officials must also be prepared to ensure that any new measures do not curtail voting rights or present additional obstacles to people and communities who already face barriers to the ballot box.

As state and local officials work to address these issues in a timely manner, we urge careful and thoughtful consideration of the intended and unintended consequences of changing election laws and processes. The right to vote is at the heart of civil liberties, and at this critical time, it should be paramount to protect that right.

Respectfully,

Julia Decker
Policy Director
ACLU-MN