



May 9, 2017

Minnesota Senate
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Senate File 514 – Election Omnibus Bill

The ACLU of Minnesota (ACLU-MN) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to defending the civil liberties of all Minnesotans under the United States and Minnesota constitutions. We have over 44,000 supporters throughout Minnesota.

The principle that a legitimate government can only derive its power from the consent of the governed is what led to the founding of America. This founding principle, through the struggle of many, including people of all political views, has led to a steady expansion of voting rights. We are concerned that Senate File 514 is a step backwards.

Senate File 514 introduces the use of provisional ballots into Minnesota's election process. It would end Minnesota's long-standing system of allowing all challenged voters to swear an oath that they are eligible to vote, with the consequence of felony conviction if they are not eligible. There are many reasons the information regarding a voter could be inaccurate and not verifiable between voting and ballot counting. We are therefore concerned that many Minnesotans will have their vote incorrectly voided. Also of great concern, the proposed process does not allow a challenged voter to provide any additional information to prove their eligibility, violating another core principle of our democracy, the right to due process. This new provisional balloting system would undermine Minnesota's established process which is fair, efficient, accessible, and reliable.

Senate File 514 also makes the challenge status of Minnesota voters publicly accessible. The ACLU generally supports the protection of personal information. This information, felony conviction status in particular, is often inaccurate, and the release of it can be damaging to a person's ability to secure employment, housing and other opportunities. We are also concerned that the information could be used to harass or intimidate the person.

Accordingly, the ACLU-MN respectfully urges you to oppose these provisions in SF 514.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Benjamin Feist".

Benjamin Feist
Legislative Director

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