



January 24, 2017

St. Paul Charter Commission
15 Kellogg Blvd. West, 310 City Hall
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear St. Paul Charter Commission Members,

St. Paul voters will elect the city's next mayor using Ranked Choice Voting this year. While St. Paul voters approved RCV in 2009, this will be the first citywide use of RCV as Mayor Chris Coleman steps down after 12 years of service.

As chair of the Minnesota DFL Party, which endorsed RCV as part of the party's Ongoing Platform, I'm excited that all St. Paul voters will have the opportunity to rank their ballots. DFLers statewide adopted Ranked Choice Voting in our party platform because we believe RCV makes elections more inclusive and participatory, values that Democrats strongly uphold.

I'm proud of our party's commitment to improving our democratic process and look forward to the campaign ahead in St. Paul under RCV. It promises to be a competitive race with plenty of robust, yet civil debate.

I'm writing you because I've heard there is an interest by some to put forward a charter amendment to repeal RCV. I urge the Commission to reject any such proposal. A repeal effort would be a huge disservice to St. Paul voters and would be an attack on the very system their next mayor will be elected under. Even more critically, an attempt to repeal RCV would distract everyone from the vital issues St. Paul voters – and candidates – care about.

As RCV campaigns in St. Paul's Ward 1 and Ward 2 have shown, voters find RCV overwhelmingly simple to use. Moreover, voter turnout has increased in races under RCV and candidates have been positive and issue-focused. There's no basis for reverting back to the old system, which would require voters to turnout for two elections instead of just one. Local primaries attract few voters and are costly to taxpayers and campaigns. RCV rolls the local primary into the General Election and ensures the candidate with the broadest support wins in the decisive November election when turnout is highest and most diverse.

The DFL is proud to continue to make our democracy better and applauds St. Paul voters for being leaders in adopting RCV. I look forward to the race ahead and am committed to ensuring that the DFL helps to prepare St. Paul voters to participate fully and effectively in the election. At a time when citizens across the nation are becoming discouraged and disengaged, St. Paul has the opportunity to demonstrate to the rest of the country how RCV can more fully engage voters and help to build a stronger democracy. Please support St. Paul voters in this crucial endeavor.

Sincerely,

Ken Martin
Chairman, Minnesota DFL Party