

December 1, 2018

St. Paul Charter Commission
City of St. Paul
15 Kellogg Boulevard West
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing in opposition to the Ramsey County Elections Office's proposed changes to Section 8.03: Determination of Sufficiency. The highlighted text will effectively reject the signatures of St. Paul residents who move frequently, have not voted within the last four elections, refuse to give their birth year, or change names due to marriage or divorce but do not update their registration record:

On the day that a petition is submitted, the city clerk shall obtain a public list of registered voters from the statewide voter registration system. Using this list, the city clerk shall match the name, address and year of birth from the petition to the corresponding voter record for each person signing the petition. Any signature for which the city clerk cannot match this information must be rejected. The city clerk shall maintain a log of all rejected signatures, listing the page and line number of each rejected signature and the reason for the rejection. The voter registration list

In full disclosure, I have an active lawsuit against the City of St. Paul, Ms. Shari Moore, in her capacity as City Clerk, and Mr. Joseph Mansky, in his capacity as the County Elections manager, over this issue of what is an acceptable signature. I have not copied Ms. Moore and Mr. Mansky on this letter for that reason.

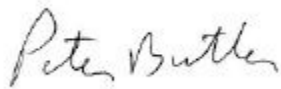
The public list of registered voters excludes people who have not voted in four years (inactive) or people whose registration is "challenged" because the U.S. Postal Service returned as undeliverable a registration confirmation post card to the county. The State Legislative Auditor reports that 25% of registered Minnesota voters have an inactive status (see attached page).

People who transpose their address on a petition, do not use their full legal name (included hyphenated last names) or provide the wrong birth year will have their signatures rejected. People who sign the petition and then move to another St. Paul address will have their signatures rejected.

The County Elections Office is fully capable of matching people by name and address only or name and birth year only and also to previous registration addresses. Requiring the petition information to exactly match the current voter-registration record will eliminate many residents' voices (especially low-income individuals, renters and college students). People can easily register or update their registration on election day. Requiring an exact match between a petition signature and a current voter registration record makes it harder to sign a petition than to actually vote.

A petition is a preliminary exercise to place an idea on the ballot for the full electorate to decide. Strict signature requirements will eliminate legitimate residents' signatures. If Section 8.03 is to be changed, I recommend that any eligible voter (over 18 years, Minnesota resident, U.S. citizen) be the required qualifications for a valid signature. Candidate petitions only required signers to be eligible, not registered.

Sincerely,



Peter K. Butler
2140 Bayard Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55116

Excerpt from Legislative Auditor Report, [Voter Registration](#), March 2018

Exhibit B.1: In August 2017, Minnesota's Statewide Voter Registration System contained over 5.4 million records.

Status	Records	Listed on Voter Roster?
Active	3,243,688	Yes
Challenged ^a	30,661	Yes
Postal return ^b	17,882	
Felony	7,837	
Other ^c	4,856	
Guardianship	55	
Citizen	31	
Inactive ^d	1,371,732	No
Deceased	464,792	No
Deleted ^e	302,221	No
Pending ^f	201	No
Total	5,413,295	

^a "Challenged" indicates there is a question about the registrant's eligibility to vote or to vote in the precinct. A challenge does not necessarily mean that the person is ineligible to vote. Because a registrant may be challenged for more than one reason, registrants may be counted more than once. Challenged registrants must swear an oath for challenged voters before voting or, in some cases, provide proof of residence.

^b "Postal return" indicates that the U.S. Postal Service returned an election mailing as "undeliverable." The postal service may not forward election mailings and their return might indicate a registrant's residence is in question.

^c "Other" includes challenges due to a name change, an issue with both the person's name and address, identifying information that was unverifiable with data from either the Department of Public Safety or the Social Security Administration, voting out of precinct, or requesting an absentee ballot be sent to a different address than the person's verified address.

^d "Inactive" indicates that the person's registration has lapsed because the person has moved out of state, has not voted or initiated other activity on their record in the last four years, or has submitted a written request for removal of his or her record. Because a registrant may be inactive for more than one reason, registrants may be counted more than once in this number.