

Dear City Council Members,

The Charter Change you are to vote on under Ord 19-16 disenfranchises voters especially voters who have moved or changed their name since they last voted. This restrictive language of using voter rolls to validate signatures makes signing a petition more difficult than voting in an election.

This is not open government. This shuts down citizen input by only allowing signatures from registered voters, filled in perfectly to count.

This issue needs more discussion and should be voted on by the citizens, not rushed through by the City Council.

Colleen Halpine

From: Colleen Halpine <colleenhalpine@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 3, 2019 11:27 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward1 <Ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Vote no on Petition Signature Ord 19-16

Dear Dai and Staff,

I am attaching more information about the realities of implications for Ward 1 citizens if the signature ordinance Ord 19-16 is passed. Dai has the power to defeat this. A charter change only takes one no vote to be defeated.

Attached please find Peter Butler's response to the concerns raised by Jane Prince at the May 1, 2019 city council meeting.

I plan to send Peter's comments to other citizens and Ward 1 candidates so they also understand the ordinance change. More citizen participation is something that should be pushed by Dai. This ordinance disenfranchises Ward 1 especially and will be hard to defend in an election where voter disenfranchisement is already an issue.

Dai avoids this by voting against this ord 19-16.

Colleen Halpine

Thank you for being concerned enough to lay this proposal over one week and to ask questions about the impact of this potential change. I'm extremely grateful for your commitment to ensuring fairness in citizen initiative and referendum.

The "matching requirement" is largely for Ramsey County Elections Office's administrative convenience. The most expedient method of searching the statewide voter registration database is by the voter's current registration address. The database cannot be searched by past registration addresses, although that data is stored in the voter's record. An address search quickly shows who is registered at that address. If the Elections Office has to search by name, then they need to go into the detailed voter record (more tabs to check) to confirm they have found the person (typically matching by birth year and perhaps previous registration address).

St. Paul's public voter registration list contains approximately 150,000 names and many people will have difficulty checking that list against the collected signatures. Also, handing out voter registration cards doesn't mean the petition signer will complete and mail the card. The signer could complete the card and give it to the petition circulator, but that slows down the signature collection process and a person can only turn in 10 voter registration cards per day.

Despite Mr. Tripplet's assurances that nick names and transposed numbers will be accepted, a citizen has no legal ability to challenge any rejected signature that does not match the current voter registration record. The Elections Office will automatically reject any signature without a birth year, even if the name and address match the voter record.

This requirement provides little benefit to the citizen petitioner. Collecting signatures is extremely time intensive and having to collect an additional 10 to 15% (the rejection rates on the trash and Ford Site petitions) is burdensome. Frankly, the best strategy is to collect from single family homes in Wards 3 and 4 to ensure that the signature will match the current voter list.