



MINNESOTA COUNCIL
ON FOUNDATIONS

a community of grantmakers

2/21/2025

Re: HF550 Bipartisan Redistricting Commission

Dear Chair Quam and members of the committee,

My name is May Yang, and I am the Senior Manager of Policy and Partnerships with the Minnesota Council on Foundations (MCF). MCF is a statewide association of more than 150 Grantmakers focused on ensuring Minnesota has a strong charitable sector and an inclusive democracy where everyone can be seen, counted, and heard. We are committed to strengthening democratic systems and civic participation. As part of this, we support state decisions and investments that will prepare Minnesota for a full 2030 census count and redistricting processes that put people first through fair representation.

We are heartened to see efforts to reimagine the redistricting process for Minnesota. The creation of a commission recognizes that Minnesota's traditional process has not been working. However, we wish to express some concerns with the proposals outlined in HF550 which would minimize community input.

- HF550 proposes that commissioners be appointed by elected officials which allows for conflicts of interest. To ensure that commissioners are acting in the best interest of all Minnesotans and not favoring any one party, we advocate that for an appointing authority that is not affiliated with any political party.
- The redistricting principles listed in HF550 rank Communities of Interests towards the bottom. Ideally, the preservation of communities of interest would be closer to the top. Doing so would allow for Minnesotans with shared policy concerns, history, language, geography, and more to be empowered.
- There is no language for hearings to occur during the evenings or weekend when more community members can attend and be heard. We encourage language that commits to hearings scheduled during the evenings and weekends to maximize Minnesotan's participation and ability to have their voice heard.

We urge the committee to consider other redistricting approaches that better promote fairness and community participation. **An independent commission would promote a more inclusive democracy by establishing redistricting processes and principles that maximize community input and participation, allowing Minnesotans to have a role in ensuring district lines reflect changing community needs and interests.**

Thank you to the committee for your leadership and interest in redistricting reform and for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

May Yang myang@mcf.org

Senior Manager of Policy and Partnerships - Minnesota Council on Foundations