

February 24, 2025

Representative Quam
House Elections Committee
2nd Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Testimony submitted for 2/24/2025 House Elections committee in opposition of HF550.

I am Tom Wiesen, I am a resident of Mahtomedi. Having spent over 30 years as a Manufacturing professional, I have learned one immutable truth: The quality of a product is directly proportional to the quality of the process that created it. Likewise, the quality of our government is directly proportional to the quality of the election process that elects its members.

One of the primary root cause barriers to representative elections and representative government is the gerrymandering of districts that allow only 10 percent of state elections to be competitive. As redistricting only happens every ten years, it's important that we get it right whenever we go through the exercise.

Some basic principles need to be understood before assessing the likely outcomes of HF550:

- Bipartisan is a bad word.

Bipartisan is often used as an indicator of fair, equitable, and representative circumstances or decision outcomes. Since our state and federal government is dominated by two and only two political parties, Bipartisan seems like a good word on the surface, by comparison, since it's better than one party rule. One party rule is what North Korea, China, and Russia have. We have just one functional party more than those countries with oppressive regimes. The effects of political party domains on constituents can be compared to traveling through the desert. Single party control is like being dragged across the desert behind a car. Bipartisan is like walking across the desert with no water. Non-partisan is like getting a ride in an air-conditioned car. Partisan is partisan, Bipartisan is partisan, non-partisan is not. Bipartisan means that the outcome will likely be satisfactory to the two parties, independent of the needs or will of We the People. Non-partisan needs to become the new expected status quo goal.

One only needs to look at this committee's last meeting on Feb 17th to see an example of the pitfall of partisan and bipartisan behavior. Four bills were discussed. Three dealt with reducing corruption in campaign finance and scheduling of election dates. Objectively reasonable amendments were put forth, all amendments were voted down on hard party line votes, all three bills voted to pass on hard party lines. The last bill, HF 73 was gleefully laid over in a "Bipartisan" manner. While on the surface, the bill HF73 attempts to allow voters to have a voice in election through increased re-imbusement of their donations to political parties and candidates. The reality is that over 99% of the \$1.7M taxpayer reimbursed donations went to just the two major parties who can move money to district races where the donor cannot vote, and incumbent duopoly candidates. This bill in its current form does nothing for voter's voices, but does everything to enhance fundraising for parties and candidates, who are focused on manipulating elections for their respective parties. And the duopoly can get behind more money for them on a bipartisan basis.

Bipartisan needs to be accurately understood as a word of disparagement, inequity, misrepresented, and independent of constituent's interests.

- Clean Constitution.

The founding fathers of our country warned us against the affliction of factions (political parties). As such, the only reference to any political party in the Minnesota Constitution should be in prohibitive language; language that blocks or prohibits any rights, authority, responsibility, or entitlement for political parties. The Constitution shall not convey, create, endorse, or allow any special status upon any political party, as this is in direct conflict with the interests and self-governance by We the People. Currently, Minnesota has only one party stain on its constitution in the form of Article IV Section nine, that mandates partisanship when determining pay raises for the legislature. This stain needs to be removed as well. Adding any reference to political parties in the constitution is to piss on the graves of our founding fathers and the citizens of Minnesota.

- Party purpose

The purpose of the Duopoly monopoly political parties in Minnesota is fundamentally to be election tools, to elect members that share their values as demonstrated by their common purpose or objective statements clearly articulated in their respective constitutions, to gain an unfair advantage in elections.

Various Constitution purpose statements of local Political party units:

- SD33 GOP Constitution
 - The primary objectives of MN SD33 shall be to elect endorsed Republicans to public office and to promote Republican philosophy and advance conservative principles.
- MN DFL Constitution
 - The purpose of the DFL Party shall be to elect candidates to public office who represent the party's shared values. Those shared values are embodied by the DFL Party Platform, consisting of the Ongoing Platform and Action Agenda, and by the Charter and Bylaws of the Democratic Party of the United States.
- MN GOP Constitution
 - The object of the Party shall be the maintenance of government by and for the people according to the Constitution and the laws of the United States and the State of Minnesota, and the implementation of such principles as may from time to time be adopted by Party conventions. To obtain this object it is essential the party shall organize at all levels to elect Republicans to public office.

Political parties are self serving organizations. There is nothing inherently wrong with self serving organizations, most organizations form around a set of ideas that are not in the mainstream. If their ideas were in the mainstream, there would be no need for an organization to support the ideas. Political parties form around ideas, ideals, principles, and political philosophies. They recruit like-minded candidates and support their campaign efforts. These activities are all beneficial for a healthy government ecosystem. It is at this point where a line needs to be drawn.

Any direct participation or control of elections by political parties is an In-your-Face, Outloud, direct conflict of interest. Giving political parties, organizations focused on gaining an unfair advantage in elections, control of elections, is like mandating that gang leaders be on the juries for criminal cases where their members are charged with crimes. In any other domain, this would be prohibited or even outlawed.

HF550

This bill has a number of good provisions for managing redistricting, but it is built on an intentional corrupt party centric house of cards. The idea that the four most partisan people in office will select party-independent committee members is to insult the intelligence of every voter. You cannot put the fox in charge of the hen house. Again, parties are exerting authority they have not been given by We the People. As the effects of redistricting directly affects the outcomes of elections, no member of parties or active members of congress can be involved in the selection of committee members as this is a direct conflict of interest. Any Representative voting for this bill, with redistricting members being selected by political party bosses, shows that the Representative cares more about party loyalty than they care about their constituents or free, fair, and representative elections and government.

Recommendation:

Redistricting committee members need to be motivated to create representative districts, that follow the guidelines and produce competitive districts. These motivations will not be found by the most partisan party leaders in government, or the party minions they would select. I would recommend that the redistricting committee be comprised of non-partisan staff members nominated by the Secretary of State, and could come from the Secretary of State's office and/or non-partisan county election officials. The nominated members could be vetted by a third party organization and approved by the legislature or the Governor. I would also recommend creating a redistricting analysis committee that would track the effectiveness of the redistricting process and make recommendations for improving the process and guidelines for future re-districting events.

With selection of committee members left to party bosses, I strongly recommend voting NO on HF 550.

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