

Senate State & Local Government Committee

March 17th, 2023

HB 1273 - Testimony in **Opposition**

Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **opposition** to HB 1273.

Approval Voting addresses a problem that was deemed serious enough by the Fargo City Commission to merit creation of a task force. The problem was that candidates were winning elections despite receiving a small percentage of the votes cast (barely 20%). The task force process ultimately didn't result in changes, but the seriousness of the problem persisted. After an initiated ballot measure, Approval Voting passed by an overwhelming majority (nearly two-thirds).

I've heard discussion about how allowing citizens to vote for more than one candidate is "un-democratic". However, to pass HB 1273 is to trample on the votes of a significant majority of Fargo voters. Likewise, how does it serve the principles of Democracy for the people to be represented by candidates that 8 out of 10 people did *not* vote for?

Approval Voting allows people to express their preferences far more effectively and clearly. Voters don't have to worry about the viability of their preferred candidate, or "throwing their vote away". By doing away with vote splitting, the system favors candidates acceptable to the largest number of people, which is what we should strive for in elections. It's an important tool to ensure that election winners better represent the true opinion of the majority of voters, and experts agree that it does an excellent job in this respect.

In short, I strongly urge you to recommend **against** the passage of HB 1273.

Sincerely,

David Voecks

Fargo, ND

