

# **MINNESOTA ALLIANCE OF PEACEMAKERS**

## **PROPOSAL FOR THE DELEGATE COUNCIL**

### **Election Reform: Count Every Vote and Make Every Vote Count**

#### **CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS**

Citizens for Election Integrity-MN, Minneapolis Better Ballot Campaign, Foundation for Global Community-MN, Growing Communities for Peace and Arise! Bookstore.

#### **PROPOSAL SUMMARY**

We are proposing that Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers (MAP) support two resolutions, one at the national level and one at the local level, addressing election reform that will have implications for peace issues.

#### **PROPOSAL**

##### **Background**

We envision that in a true democracy votes are counted accurately, elections are run fairly and that every vote counts. We believe that in a functioning democracy where these conditions are true that peace is possible and war is not. We believe that structural reform in the way we conduct elections and vote is fundamental to our ability to make progress on our agenda of peace. Our country would unlikely be at war in Iraq and would instead be more able to invest in education, health care, the environment, and other fundamental pillars of sustainable peace if we had laws and voting systems in place in 2000 that prevented stolen elections, allowed voters to vote their conscience and not their fears and ensured that a majority a voters decided the outcome of the election. These conditions were not in place.

Two MAP member organizations – Citizens for Election Integrity and Minneapolis Better Ballot Campaign – are actively working on election reform initiatives to address these problems.

##### **Electronic Voting Resolution – Citizens for Election Integrity**

Citizens for Election Integrity-MN is a nonprofit organization working to ensure that votes are counted accurately. Insecure voting machines and voting irregularities have eroded confidence in the election process and the accuracy of the vote. Without confidence in our voting system our representative democracy is undermined. In 2004, roughly 30% of the votes were cast on unreliable electronic touch screen voting machines known as DRE's. These DRE's provide no paper ballot that can be verified by the voter. Without proper checks and balances, the scale for potential electronic vote fraud could surpass all opportunities available previously. These concerns about fraud are not simply speculation. A 2003 Johns Hopkins and Rice University computer experts revealed

hundreds of security flaws in the software of a leading manufacturer. Other studies confirm these findings.

The following resolution is part of a national campaign to enact federal legislation to address electronic voting problems.

### **Electronic Voting Resolution**

Whereas, there are serious questions about the security of electronic voting machines and this endangers the integrity of our elections; and

Whereas, a voter verified paper audit trail, random mandatory audits and voting machine software with source code available for public inspection are all essential elements to ensure an accurate counting of the vote whenever electronic voting machines are used; and

Whereas, in Minnesota we have same day registration and new legislation that requires a voter verified paper audit trail, random audits and that voting machine software be put in escrow for third party inspection; and

Whereas, 27 states have passed legislation requiring a voter verified paper audit trail, but many of these states do not require random audits and none require publicly available software source code.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers endorse legislation requiring all states to have a voter verified paper audit trail, mandatory random audits, open source software available for public inspection and same day registration.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT MAP encourage each member organization to consider:

1. Endorsing legislation requiring all states to have a voter verified paper audit trail, mandatory random audits, open source software available for public inspection and same day registration.
2. Urge candidates to support this legislation.
3. Request their members to present the electronic voting resolution to their precinct caucus (see [www.ceimn.org](http://www.ceimn.org) for a copy of the resolution).

### **Better Ballot Campaign Resolution**

The Better Ballot Campaign is a local referendum campaign for the adoption of Instant Runoff Voting in Minneapolis. Instant Runoff Voting is gaining momentum across the country as an alternative to our current two-round runoff and plurality voting systems, which are characterized by low voter turnout, elected officials without a mandate by a majority of voters, disproportionate representation, spoiler candidates, wasted votes, expensive campaigns, negative campaigning, and hollow public debates.

Efforts to promote better voting methods are taking root in cities across the country in order to demonstrate success and effectiveness, and to build a base of support for better

voting methods at the state and national level. This is why the Minneapolis campaign to adopt Instant Runoff Voting is so important.

The following is a resolution of support for Instant Runoff Voting in Minneapolis.

### ***Minneapolis Instant Runoff Voting Resolution***

Whereas, there is persistently low turnout for the city Primary Election;

Whereas, Instant Runoff Voting accomplishes the purpose of two rounds of voting in just one general election;

Whereas, Instant Runoff Voting is already being used in San Francisco California, Cambridge Massachusetts, the State of Louisiana, and is pending in nine other jurisdictions throughout the country;

Whereas, Instant Runoff Voting is endorsed by the Minneapolis Star Tribune, League of Women Voters of Minnesota and Minneapolis, DFL Progressive Caucus, and several other community organizations;

Whereas, Instant Runoff Voting in Minneapolis will

- Maximize voter participation and available choices of candidates,
- Assure fairer and more accurate representation of all voters,
- Eliminate the cost of the Primary Election and reduce the cost of campaigns,
- Lead to more informative and positive campaigns;

Whereas, the Better Ballot Campaign for Instant Runoff Voting for Minneapolis elections is endorsed by a majority of the city council, the city's legislative delegation, and county board members representing Minneapolis;

Whereas, the use of Instant Runoff Voting in Minneapolis and other Minnesota municipalities can be a model for Instant Runoff Voting on a statewide level.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT that the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers endorse adoption of Instant Runoff Voting for Minneapolis elections and encourage member organizations to participate in the campaign in the following ways:

1. Gather petition signatures from constituencies for a charter amendment petition (signatures due by May 8, 2006)
2. Recruit constituent supporters to participate in the 2006 party caucus process, including presenting the IRV charter amendment resolution at the March 7th caucuses and city endorsing convention
3. Plan and coordinate educational events to promote the campaign for members and constituents
4. Promote the IRV charter amendment campaign on the organization's web site and in other public communications
5. Ask constituencies to write letters to the editor and commentaries to community papers
6. Recruit other coalition partners

## **MAP PROPOSAL CRITERIA**

### **Does the proposal appeal to a broad segment of MPA membership?**

Delegates from several MAP members are sponsoring this proposal, including Citizens for Election Integrity-MN, Minneapolis Better Ballot Campaign, Foundation for Global Community-MN, Growing Communities for Peace, and Arise Bookstore. The Foundation for Global Community and Arise Bookstore have independently endorsed the Better Ballot Campaign and endorsements by several other MAP members are in the works, including Resource Center of the Americas, National Lawyers Guild, Saint Joan of Arc, Friends for a Non-Violent World, First Universalist Church and First Unitarian Society.

### **Is the proposal consistent with MAP's mission and meet at least one guiding principle?**

Election reform for clean, fair and representative democracy directly promotes the principles of Primacy of Justice, Providing for Future Generations, Fundamental Human Rights and Responsibility and Accountability, and is consistent with the other guiding principles of MAP.

Primacy of Justice: Clean, fair and democratic elections are the foundation of justice.

Providing for Future Generations: Clean, fair and democratic elections make "participatory and civic responsibility" possible.

Fundamental Human Rights and Responsibility and Accountability: Clean, fair and democratic elections are a requirement of a responsible and accountable representative democracy.

Election reform helps to advance other MAP principles because they are all dependent on assumptions of a functioning democracy – that elections are legal, that every vote is counted and that every vote counts. The current initiatives are part of other efforts locally and nationally to make elections fairer and more accurate.

### **Are people responsible for leadership and development?**

An ad hoc elections reform working group (core team), has formed to develop, sponsor and provide leadership for this proposal and the work activities identified in the proposed resolutions. The members of this team include:

Jeanne Massey (Better Ballot Campaign)  
Mark Halvorson (Citizens for Election Integrity-MN)  
Burt Berlowe (Growing Communities for Peace)  
Bill Barnett (Alliant Action and Better Ballot Campaign)  
Nancy and Tom Atchison (Alliance of Peacemakers)  
Dick Bernard (Alliance of Peacemakers)  
Rebecca Cramer (Haiti Justice Committee)  
Sook Holdridge (Foundation for Global Community-MN)  
Ann Lewis (Alliance of Peacemakers)  
Cecil Ramnaraine (St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral)  
Verlyn Smith (ELCA TC Synods)  
Bruce Fisher (Tikkun Community)

## **Is the proposal feasible and practical?**

The two proposed resolutions are sponsored by broad-based and energetic initiatives with strong support, involvement and momentum. The Electronic Voting initiative is an advocacy campaign on a national level, organized by Citizens for Election Integrity in Minnesota. The Better Ballot Campaign is a referendum campaign on a local (city) level, organized by a registered non-partisan campaign committee and board of advisors.

MAP members are being invited to become a part of these initiatives. Both resolutions have specific goals and ways in which MAP members can participate in and support each effort. The role of MAP in endorsing these resolutions is to serve as a vehicle for engaging member organizations in supporting these initiatives.

### ***Electronic Voting Resolution***

#### **Goals**

- To promote public discussion and awareness of the problems involved in electronic voting through the caucus process and in organizations.
- To have all members of Minnesota's congressional delegation cosponsor HR550, which is considered the "gold standard" of verifiability legislation with over 160 cosponsors.

#### **Resources and Capacity**

The electronic voting resolution is one of several projects promoting election integrity. Citizens for Election Integrity has a core of about 15 active volunteers, plus several groups we coordinate with closely, in addition to a list serve of over 300 people. At the state level it will be focusing on educational forums and a campaign to observe Minnesota's first mandatory audit of the election results in 80 precincts in the fall of 2006.

### ***Better Ballot Campaign Resolution***

#### **Goals**

The immediate goal of the Better Ballot campaign is to put the Instant Runoff Voting Charter Amendment on the 2006 ballot in Minneapolis. To accomplish this, the campaign is organizing to:

- Gain political party endorsement - the campaign is organizing to introduce resolutions and win support for Instant Runoff Voting at the precinct caucuses on March 7th and the city endorsing convention in May.
- Seek organizational endorsements and support to help collect petition signatures - 10,000 by May 8<sup>th</sup>
- Build community awareness about and support for Instant Runoff Voting through house parties and presentations at neighborhoods, churches and synagogues, and community organizations

The campaign has an action plan for achieving each of these goals and campaign volunteers will work with MAP members to coordinate petition signature gathering, caucus recruitment, event planning and other activities.

### Resources and Capacity

The Better Ballot campaign is a referendum campaign with an organizing committee of 15 volunteers – including long time activists, organizers and campaign managers – to coordinate petition signatures, educational events and caucus organizing. Its Board of Advisors is composed of elected and community leaders, including representatives from the Democratic-Farmer-Labor, Republican, Green and Independence parties.

### **Priority support from MAP**

- Get MAP's endorsement
- Finding more people to participate
- Gain leveraged exposure

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Citizens for Election Integrity  
Mark Halvorson  
4136 44th Ave South  
Minneapolis, MN 55406  
[mshalvorson@mn.rr.com](mailto:mshalvorson@mn.rr.com)  
<http://www.electionintegritymn.org>  
(612) 724-1736

Better Ballot Campaign  
Jeanne Massey  
3606 Harriet Ave South  
Minneapolis, MN 55409  
[info@betterballotcampaign.org](mailto:info@betterballotcampaign.org)  
[www.betterballotcampaign.org](http://www.betterballotcampaign.org)  
612-850-6897