

PRESS GUIDE FOR BK FOR SOS CAMPAIGN

# BRUCE KENNEDY FOR MINNESOTA SECRETARY OF STATE

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CANDOR  
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NEUTRALITY  
INNOVATION

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# PRESS RELEASE

Bruce Kennedy of Roseville has formally announced his candidacy for Secretary of State in 2006. Among other things, the Secretary of State coordinates elections.

Kennedy, a self-employed lawyer since 1978, has been a volunteer advocate for electoral reform for five years.

Kennedy is not affiliated with a political party. "I believe the umpire should not be a member of one of the teams," he says. "I may decide to run under a party banner, but only with the understanding that once I'm elected, that party will have no special influence over me."

"I like all the political parties. I love the process. I will be happy to be a neutral referee and make sure the game is played fairly."

The current Secretary of State, Mary Kiffmeyer, is a poor leader, he says. "It's amazing how much contempt election officials all over the state have for her."

"You want your Secretary of State to be someone who's a straight shooter. Instead, she conducts her business behind closed doors and won't admit when she's made a mistake."

For Minnesota to compete around the world, we need to have the best possible government, he says. "The future of voting is ranked voting, because it produces elected officials who are the most representative of the people. It reduces polarization, increases participation, encourages more choices, and turns the focus from divisive issues to real solutions." Our current Secretary of State has avoided discussing ranked voting publicly, but has sabotaged it among members of her party, he says. And she has led us into a voting equipment vendor monopoly.

Kennedy favors an exploration of open source elections software, for security, flexibility, and cost savings. "We need to escape from the tyranny of proprietary software and hardware in our voting equipment. Elections are too important to entrust to these companies. Our next Secretary of State needs to be open to innovation."

The Secretary of State has the duty of promoting voter turnout. "Let's increase quality of vote, not just quantity," says Kennedy. "When citizens vote based on a commercial, they give power to the money that paid for that ad. As a result, elected officials are more responsive to the contributors than to the citizens." Kennedy created some homemade ads on his website which spoof the exaggeration common in political advertising. "I will promote informed voting and will seek out ways to help voters become better educated on the candidates."

Kennedy has been married 26 years to Linda, and has two grown sons. His website is [www.bk4sos.org](http://www.bk4sos.org).

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## WHY I AM BEST SUITED FOR THIS JOB

- 27 years experience as a self-employed lawyer—insight into small-business
- Five years experience as an advocate on electoral issues—insight into voting equipment issues
- Qualified neutral with superb skills at rendering fair judgments and collaborating with antagonistic individuals
- 16 years experience as an advocate for legal reform, drafting bills, collaborating with stakeholders, finding common ground, simplifying laws, repealing archaic processes, presenting testimony, finding creative and innovative solutions
- Leadership role in the Bar Association for 13 years, rated Superlawyer by Minnesota Law and Politics, AV rating in Martindale Hubbell
- Reputation as a straight-shooter with colleagues, friends, acquaintances, legislators

# IMPORTANCE OF NEUTRALITY OF SECRETARY OF STATE

In the past, the Secretary of State's office has had a low profile. But recently, the office has gotten more attention, particularly because of close presidential elections. In both swing states Florida (2000) and Ohio (2004), the Secretaries were also the state campaign managers of President Bush. Many people feel the actions of these Secretaries influenced the result. This does not inspire confidence in the integrity of elections.

This is not a partisan issue. Last year, Mike Erlandson indicated that he was considering a run for Secretary of State of Minnesota. In his role as Minnesota DFL Chair, he was the chief hatchet man against the Republicans, regularly ridiculing their positions and their leaders. Clearly, Republicans would be concerned about having Mike in charge of Minnesota elections.

The best way for citizens of all philosophies to feel secure is to have a neutral party as Secretary of State. A candidate who has been a partisan party regular is not desirable. Mary Kiffmeyer was a Republican activist before her election as Secretary of State.

Anybody can claim to be neutral. Citizens are going to be curious about what my personal political beliefs are on specific issues. I am reluctant to share those or discuss who I voted for in the past. I'm hoping it will be enough if I share some of my beliefs and principles. I think that people who know me from my work at the Capitol have observed that I strive to be fair and see the strengths of both sides of an issue. I am a certified neutral and in that role have helped hundreds of people resolve their disputes. Here are some of my beliefs:

I believe in representative democracy, also known as a republic.

I believe the executive branch should be representative of the majority, and the legislative branch should be representative of all.

I think a lot about process, and I take my inspiration from James Madison. I believe if the process is good, then the results will be good. I don't advocate reforms to advantage any political viewpoint, beyond the principles which I enunciated above.

I believe that the market economy is effective, and that all proposed government interventions should be scrutinized as to why the market doesn't meet the public's need in that area, and to analyze whether the cure will be worse than the disease. When government does intervene, it should be at the most local level possible to address that problem.

## Importance of Neutrality continued

I believe the people in government in Minnesota are basically good people, and that the annoying things that they sometimes do are usually the product of the difficult circumstances that they are in.

I don't object to taxes, but I want the money to be spent wisely.

I have worked in two political campaigns, Goldwater in 1964 and McGovern in 1972. I still admire both of those men for their candor, but my own political views are now somewhere between the two.

I like to hear both sides of the story and invent a creative way to accommodate the best of both sides.

I have attended DFL caucuses on a couple of occasions, but I get disappointed when people always talk about reapportioning the pie, rather than making the pie bigger.

I was raised a Republican and though I have "strayed from the flock," I have always appreciated the principles of fiscal responsibility and personal liberty. My favorite show was "The Firing Line" with William F. Buckley, Jr.—and it still would be if it was on the air.

Even though I am a centrist, I look to the extremes for possible solutions. That's why I fit with a group referred to as the "radical center."

It is my respect for both the extremes and the center, and my commitment to process over politics, which enable me to be neutral.

Given the choice, most people would want the administrator of elections to be someone who shares their political views. But you will probably only successfully elect such a person 50% of the time or less. Why chance it?

Questions:

Did Mary Kiffmeyer fire her Republican Deputy Scott Simmons because he invited DFL legislators to a demonstration of voting equipment?

Why do Kiffmeyer or her deputies speak to the Republican House and Senate caucuses about issues they avoid in public hearings?

When third party candidates contact the SOS office to ask about things such as petition requirements and deadlines for special elections, why are they asked to "look it up"? [Source: Bill Dodge, Constitution Party]

# RANKED VOTING

In today's world, the states and countries that have the best government have a competitive advantage. Governments that can solve policy issues and avoid standstills of polarization can foster greater productivity.

Our government is insufficiently representative of the people. Here in Minnesota, it has become rare when a state executive receives a majority of the votes cast. "I think it's in our best interests to make sure that the people who get elected are the people who have the majority vote and who have the legitimacy to be able to govern and use [taxpayer's] money wisely."-- Rep. Jim Knoblach, May 5, 2003.

The plurality system squelches legitimate candidacies. Our society suffers when qualified people refuse to run because they fail party litmus tests or fear the berating that ensues from being a "spoiler." Voters recognize that voting for a third-party candidate is like shooting yourself in the foot.

In the legislative branch, there is an exaggeration of the differences between rural and urban because of our single-member winner-take-all districts. Only in the Legislature is there no such thing as an urban Republican or an exurban Democrat.

The United States pioneered modern democracy. But rarely has any country emulated our peculiar electoral system. We cannot continue to stand on our traditional, outdated ways of doing things and expect that we will be just fine. We can take the best of other countries and retain our fundamental American way of doing things.

In nonpartisan elections, using ranked voting simply combines two elections into one to get a quicker, more efficient, and more economical result. There simply is no rational argument that can be made against giving local governments the right to use ranked voting.

## Ranked Voting continued

Partisan elections are trickier. Our current primary system simply nominates a candidate from each of many parties; thus, there is no guarantee of a majority winner. A solution would be to have a subsequent runoff, but extending the campaign into a Minnesota December, when citizens are already fed up with politics, is a recipe for high expense (both for candidates and taxpayers) and low turnout. A revamped primary and general election process, which includes ranking, could produce legitimate and well-qualified elected officials in an efficient and edifying process.

On the legislative side, electing one of the houses with proportional representation would produce a legislature with a better continuum of philosophies, eliminate gerrymandering, and keep races competitive.

Questions:

Why is having a representative government a good thing?

How will ranked voting impact the number of and viability of third parties?

Duverger's Law says that a plurality voting system will produce two party dominance. Is that true?

What is the optimal number of political parties?

More and more voters are defining themselves as independents. Would ranked voting increase that trend or reverse it? If more parties were viable, would voters find it easier to identify their philosophy in a single party?

# HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT REQUIREMENTS

In 2002, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act which donated about \$4 billion to the states for voting equipment acquisition and maintenance with some mandates attached. It is unclear why the federal government should dole out funds for something that has always been the states' responsibility, other than the federal government doesn't care about balancing its budget and the states must. In any event, Minnesota is getting about \$39 million. Approximately half that amount will need to be used to comply with the federal mandate that each polling place have equipment usable by those with disabilities in time for the 2006 elections. In Minnesota, as of this moment, there is only one certified machine, the ES&S Auto Mark, that meets this mandate. Because of the federal deadline, ES&S now has a monopoly in Minnesota.

Questions:

Was it the intent of Congress that about half of the funds would be used for equipment that for all practical purposes will only be used by those blind or dexterity challenged voters who prefer to vote in person on Election Day?

Is Minnesota getting its fair share of the HAVA money?

In Minnesota, how many blind or dexterity challenged voters are there?

How many polling places will be shut down to reduce the cost of providing disability voting equipment?

Did Mary Kiffmeyer attempt to have this federal deadline pushed back? Did she attempt to organize other secretaries of state to lobby the government for more time? Did she contact Republicans in Congress or the executive branch to press for an extension that would allow more companies to develop the equipment to compete with ES&S?

Has Mary Kiffmeyer explored or developed any other options that could potentially save the Minnesota taxpayers millions of dollars, such as commodity equipment with open source software?



## VOTING EQUIPMENT OF THE FUTURE—MAYBE THE NEAR FUTURE

In California, open source voting software is being developed that may change voting technology forever.

Open source is an increasingly respected method of software development, as witnessed by the rise of Linux, Mozilla, and Apache.

Lacking trust in the major voting equipment vendors, programmers are writing code which will eventually culminate in a state-of-the-art, comprehensive voting system. The code will be owned by the public and will be open to scrutiny.

The code can be installed on every day, normal computer equipment. Here's how the system would work:

Voters would make their selections with a touchscreen interface. Voters who are blind or suffer motor impairments can use the same equipment, embellished with an audio system, sip puff tube, or other facilitating devices.

Voting with a touchscreen interface is ideal, because there are no limitations of pre-printed ballots, and the screen prompts can make voting very simple and pleasurable. Mistakes are noticed and can be corrected immediately. More complex forms of voting can be made easy.

After the voter has completed and confirmed his or her selections, a paper ballot is printed using an everyday laser printer. This piece of paper recites all the voter's choices and has a barcode with those choices encoded.

The voter carries the paper over to the barcode scanner, allows the vote to be read, and deposits the paper in a box. The actual ballot is the piece of paper. The scanner simply automates the counting process, just like an optical scan voting machine. If there is a recount, the actual paper governs the result.

The data collected by the barcode scanner can be transmitted at the end of the day to a central counting location. If it is a ranked vote election, the instant runoff algorithm will be applied using software at the central counting location.

## Voting Equipment of the Future continued

Being open, the software is subject to great scrutiny. We'll have the highest quality software and the most secure. After local programming, the computers will be locked. They will not be networked.

While the creators of this system are primarily concerned with security, the cost savings and flexibility benefits alone will make this system worthwhile. A reasonable estimate of cost is 1/5 of what we currently pay for proprietary systems.

We will not be at the mercy of vendors who have a monopoly on parts and service, who refuse to make their equipment compatible with other vendors', who will not provide software upgrades before extracting an unreasonable price. These systems will never be obsolete. Any hardware failure is easily replaceable at the used computer store. The entire nation can have a uniform system, but one that is truly owned by the citizens.

[www.openvotingconsortium.org/our\\_solution](http://www.openvotingconsortium.org/our_solution)

Questions:

Four Minnesota counties have Diebold optical scanners and do not want to use the only certified disability machine, the ES&S Automark, because it is not compatible. Is it incompatible or is Diebold just refusing to cooperate with making it so?

The four counties are also concerned about having needing to pay multiple vendors for service. How would such a problem arise with publicly owned software and hardware?

Which is more secure, open source or proprietary?

Mary Kiffmeyer negotiated a statewide contract with ES&S that any county may choose. Is Hennepin County going to go forward with the terms she negotiated?

Considering the service rates (not just the initial cost of equipment) included in the statewide contract, did Kiffmeyer negotiate a good deal?

# VOTERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

This is a representative democracy, and our officials are elected by the people. Therefore, we only have ourselves to blame if our officials fail.

Legislators are influenced by their peers, their constituents, and their contributors. When we constituents are not vigilant, contributors and party peers gain more influence.

When voters are proactive in getting information about the candidates, the power of money is neutralized. It is disappointing when voters only learn about a candidate when they see an advertisement.

We hear continually that we must vote, and voter turnout is the measure of the quality of an election. But quantity is not quality. If we vote irresponsibly, the system fails.

As Secretary of State, I will promote voter turnout, but I will also promote informed voting. Every voter should see a copy of the ballot in advance of the election. With sufficient lead time, voters can do research on their own, find out what friends or relatives think, or get information from organizations to which they belong.

This pledge is a work in progress, but it begins to address the important responsibilities of being a citizen.

## Voter's Pledge:

- I will vote responsibly.
- One month before the election, be it primary or general, I will obtain a copy of the ballot for my precinct to confirm who the candidates are.
- I will learn about each candidate by reading publications or researching the internet.
- For every race, I will find out when there are candidate forums or debates, and I will attend those forums or watch them on cable access.
- I will seek independent sources for information and talk to people that I trust.
- If I am an intuitive rather than analytical thinker, I will base my judgments on direct observations rather than the image that is fed to me by the advertising agencies working for the candidate.
- I will avoid commercials and other content paid for by the candidates or interest groups.

## MARY KIFFMEYER SIGNS A CONTRACT TO TELL A LIE

In January, 2002, the SOS office hired a company to do maintenance on the voter registration system. In March, 2003, the company sent a bill for \$68,000. The SOS sent back a four page letter, saying that no payment would be made--the work was unsatisfactory. (Keep in mind that the terms of the contract allowed the SOS to cancel the contract at any time, with or without a reason. The contractor was required to provide the source code that was developed for no additional charge.)

Mary told the legislative auditor that she would meet with the Attorney General and Department of Administration to decide how to cancel this contract. But she never did. Why?

So she signed an agreement with the unsatisfactory contractor, paying them \$48,130 of the \$68,000 billed, and signing a statement as follows: "The State agrees that all personnel participants to this contract will not give either verbal or written statements to anyone as to the cancellation of this contract other than it was cancelled by reason of the State of Minnesota's budget cuts."

Everybody who signed that agreement knew it was not true. The budget cuts were not the sole, or even a primary, reason for the cancellation.

The literal meaning of this clause is that Mary Kiffmeyer would violate the agreement if she answered truthfully to the Legislative Auditor or to a Senate committee about this cancellation.

Mary fudged the truth before two Senate committees. To comply with the cancellation contract and avoid criticizing the company, Mary claimed that the "unsatisfactory performance" referred to was simply that the system no longer met the needs of Minnesota. If you refer to the four page letter, it is obvious that the complaint is about bugs and errors in the software, not the overall system.

Mary never admitted that she agreed to something false. She said the agreement was necessary to quickly get the source code that the company had produced, even though the company was required to provide it to the state pursuant to the contract. She made it sound like she wanted to avoid litigation over that issue. Litigation, or embarrassment?

The Secretary's lawyer is Mike Hatch. She should have contacted the AG as soon as there were problems with the contractor. Was this source code worth \$48,130 of the taxpayers' money? We may never know.

## MARY KIFFMEYER SIGNS A CONTRACT TO TELL A LIE continued

David Poliseno of the Legislative Audit Commission testified as follows: "Nothing that we found in the files indicated that [budget cuts were] the reason for them cancelling the contract, and most of the documentation centered on the fact that they were dissatisfied with the service. Regardless, the state had the option of cancelling the contract at any time with 30 days notice. And within that time, they would have been entitled to receive anything that had been developed by the contractor. So they could have avoided paying for further payment of the source code, and possibly they could have received it without having to go through the legal battle."

To download the full report as a PDF, go to <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/fad/2005> and look at Pages 12-13 of the PDF, which are pages 8-9 of the report.

### Questions:

If Mary Kiffmeyer told the truth before the Senate and admitted that election.com's software was full of bugs, would she be exposing the State of Minnesota to a lawsuit for breach of contract?

Why won't she just admit that it was a mistake—that public officials cannot sign gag orders preventing them from discussing state business?

Are the lawyers who work for the Secretary of State her lawyers, or are they assistants who just happen to be lawyers? What criteria are applied to determine when the AG is involved versus when attorneys in the Secretary's office may act independently?

Where is the authority of the Secretary of State to give opinions on the legality of election issues, for example, to deny that charter cities have the right to choose ranked voting procedures (a claim she made but then withdrew)?

# MCCL AND RANKED VOTING

The Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life (MCCL) is a Minnesota organization that lobbies for pro-life issues. According to their website, "The mission of Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life is to secure protections for innocent human life from conception until natural death through effective education, legislation and political action."

I respect that. MCCL is a group that fights for their beliefs, not for financial gain. They have done so by the power of grassroots organizing, not the power of money. If you are a pro-life person, you are probably supportive of MCCL's work.

Unfortunately for pro-lifers, the MCCL has gotten away from their mission. Their leaders are going into areas that have nothing to do with protections of human life. Either they have lost their way because of their success, or they are being used by politicians.

Specifically, I'm referring to MCCL telling legislators that if they support ranked voting, they will be reported as not pro-life.

Included is the questionnaire that MCCL issued to candidates for office earlier this year. As you can see, most of the questions relate to MCCL's mission of reducing abortion or euthanasia. Even the question about campaign finance reform has some relationship to MCCL, since it could affect how they contribute to candidates.

But look at the question about Instant Runoff Voting. It has **NOTHING** to do with pro-life issues. Nothing!

The MCCL is not being honest about why they oppose ranked voting. Can you tell from the question why? Even if it were true that it is confusing for voters (which it isn't), that would not explain why it is a pro-life issue and not merely one of the hundreds of issues that the legislature addresses that have no direct bearing on the pro-life movement.

It is interesting to note that the two most pro-life nations in the Western world, Ireland and Malta, use instant runoff voting for their elections.

I believe I know why MCCL opposes ranked voting. Ralph Nader. The most important issue to the pro-life movement, far above any others, is the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. The only way that will happen is if the President is pro-life and supports Supreme Court nominees who are pro-life. If voters in the 2000 election could rank their choices, then Ralph Nader voters could make Al Gore their second choice, and Al Gore, rather than pro-life George Bush, would be elected. To prevent that scenario from happening in the future, MCCL is trying to prevent Minnesotans from ever trying ranked voting on a local level. They are **NOT** concerned that voters will be confused. On the contrary, they are concerned that voters will like ranked voting, and that it will be expanded to presidential elections.

## MCCL AND RANKED VOTING CONTINUED

Even if this were true, how we elect people is not within MCCL's mission. But what MCCL also fails to realize is that politics is constantly changing. It is possible that if voters ranked candidates in 1992, some Ross Perot voters would put George H. W. Bush second and Clinton would never have been elected. In the future, John McCain may run as a Republican, which could incite a conservative third party to run, and cause a Democrat to win. Or McCain could run as an independent, taking votes from the Republican. In those instances, Pro-Lifers would want voters to have the right to rank their choices.

On a state level, Sue Jeffers is running for Governor of Minnesota as a Libertarian. She will draw votes away from Republican Tim Pawlenty among those who feel that government and taxes have not sufficiently shrunk under his watch. Wouldn't that be ironic if the MCCL lost their pro-life Governor because they squashed bills I drafted that would have allowed Minnesota voters to rank their choices?

Whether these events occur is not the point. It is simply wrong for MCCL to grade a candidate as not pro-life if the candidate believes that cities or school districts should have the right to hold ranked vote elections. MCCL should not try to deprive Minnesota taxpayers and voters of the right to choose an election process that is efficient, economical, and democratic.

[Note: the MCCL questionnaire submitted to candidates for Minnesota Senate in November apparently did not contain any questions about ranked voting. I hope this is an indication that they are focusing on issues related to their mission. If MCCL contacts me and states that they are unequivocally out of the ranked vote issue, I will immediately remove reference to this issue on my website. However, their website still contains claims that votes for ranked voting are a "pro-life loss." Senate Votes 3 and 4.]

Questions:

What is the connection between MCCL and Mary Kiffmeyer?

Does the MCCL still include questions about instant runoff voting in their questionnaires?

How do they defend their claim that Instant Runoff can cause a minority to rule a majority?

How does the use of IRV in local elections—or any elections—affect their mission?

If MCCL has good reasons to oppose ranked voting, why have they never testified at a public hearing to advance their views?

# KIFFMEYER'S NOTARY PARTNERSHIP

The Secretary of State's office took responsibility for notary registration in July of 2005. Shortly thereafter, Mary Kiffmeyer announced a partnership with the National Notary Association. The National Notary Association is a "non-profit" organization which has existed for many years. This association markets seminars and other products by direct mail to registered notaries. Some of their marketing techniques involve deception and exaggeration. It is not appropriate for the State of Minnesota to enter into a "partnership" with this organization.

Questions:

Why does the National Notary Association market notary malpractice insurance in a deceptive way? Does this invoice violate federal law? It does not appear to contain the precise wording required by federal postal regulations.

What are the terms of this malpractice policy? Why would a notary need malpractice coverage? Do notaries get sued if they act in good faith? Would this policy cover them if they acted in bad faith? Most notaries work for law firms, banks, insurance companies, mortgage lenders, etc. Would such notaries need malpractice coverage?

The National Notary Association puts on seminars which promise opportunities for a rewarding new career. Notaries are restricted by law to charging \$1.00 (\$357.17). Would attendance at such a seminar actually lead to employment, or sufficient skills to allow an adequate income through self-employment? What percentage of attendees get employment as a signing agent and what percentage of those would not have been able to do so otherwise?

Is it common for state agencies to form partnerships with private organizations? Under what laws are these partnerships formed? Who approves these partnerships? Is the National Notary Association paying the State of Minnesota for this partnership? What are the terms of this partnership?

Identity theft is a growing concern. What would the most effective way of educating Minnesota's notaries about this issue? What percentage of notaries will take the seminar offered by the National Notary Association?

Should notaries be required to attend education? Would such a requirement be a tax on business? Would reducing the number of notaries make commercial transactions less easy?

Commerce was in charge of notaries in Minnesota until 2005. Did Commerce provide new notaries with information about how to perform notarial acts?



# ROSEVILLE

In late 2003, the House Government operations committee, chaired by Jim Rhodes, held an informational hearing about ranked voting. The members of the committee agreed that it would be interesting if a Minnesota city would agree to try ranked voting as a pilot project.

That same year, a council member was elected mayor of Roseville, leaving a vacancy on the council. I suggested to the City Council of Roseville that if they used ranked voting, they could achieve a majority winner without a primary or a runoff. Roseville is not a charter city. The city attorney recommended that Roseville seek confirmation from the Minnesota Legislature that this process could be used. The Roseville city Council passed a resolution requesting such legislation and asked me to pursue it.

The first thing I did was meet with new deputy secretary of state Tony Kielkucki. I told him our plans and asked for his support. He seemed positive and said he would get back to me. He never did.

I drafted a bill that would give all Minnesota cities the option of using ranked voting. It was authored by Jim Rhodes, a Republican, in the House and John Marty, DFL from Roseville, in the Senate. The two House members representing Roseville, Carl Jacobson, a Republican, and Mindy Greiling, DFL, were co-authors, as well as Kathy Tinglestad, Republican, and Jim Davnie, DFL. Senate co-authors included David Knutson and Betsy Wergin, Republicans; Sheila Kiscaden, Independence; and Linda Scheid, DFL.

The bill passed through Senate committee on a partyline vote, Republicans opposed. In the house, Jim Rhodes amended the bill, restricting it to Roseville's election, and it passed through his committee. In neither case did a representative of the Secretary of State's office appear to testify concerning the bill.

I spoke to many senators about the bill, including many Republicans, and few had any objections. But when the bill reached the Senate floor, Republican Senators Kleis and Limmer argued to defeat the bill, Kleis claiming that majority rule in all offices was appropriate, but should be accomplished with a separate runoff election, rather than a ranking process. The bill passed, with only a few Republican senators in support.

I was rather alarmed by the Republican response, since I was quite sure that none of them really cared what Roseville did. I then set about to talk to as many House Republicans as I possibly could before the bill came to the House floor. Only a few of the Republicans I talked to were dismissive. Some told me point-blank that they would support the bill, and others expressed that they had no reason not to.

But getting the bill to the House floor turned out to be a problem. Roseville was in a hurry. Even if the state passed the bill, the Roseville City Council still had to meet, debate, and pass an ordinance before March 15 in order to prepare for the April election.

Roseville continued

Weeks passed, and the bill languished. I was told I needed to talk to Gregg Peppin, an assistant to the majority leader. He finally let me talk to him, and it felt like I had to justify ranked voting in the context of every conceivable election, instead of a puny little one time Roseville Councilmember election.

Evidently the Republican leaders met and finally agreed to have a floor vote. It was scheduled for March 15, the very last day Roseville could make a decision.

That afternoon, I was in front of the House chamber when the Republicans came out of their caucus. Jim Rhodes approached me and said he thought MCCL might be getting involved. Carl Jacobson, our Roseville Republican, refused to make eye contact with me as I pressed him for information. He hinted that he didn't even know if he would be supporting the bill.

I was standing in the hall on my cell phone, urging Roseville City Council members to contact Carl Jacobson, when the Roseville citizens and my family members in attendance approached to tell me that the bill was voted down. Later I saw the tape. Jim Rhodes introduced the bill, Mindy Greiling mentioned the support from the city of Roseville, Rhodes again emphasized the local nature of the bill, and then nothing. Not one word was uttered in opposition to the bill. In less than three minutes, it was then voted down, 78 to 54. Five pro-life DFLers joined all but six Republicans in defeating the bill. Carl Jacobson, who did vote yes, came out in the hall and told me, "MCCL killed the bill."

A St. Paul reporter was present and spoke to several DFLers who received notes from the MCCL, warning them that if they supported Roseville's pilot project, they would lose points on their pro-life rating. The reporter collared Steve Sviggum to get his views; he claimed that ranked voting "defied constitutionality." Majority Leader Eric Paulsen was quoted as saying: "People vote for the one person you think should take office, and you live with the results. That's democracy."

Later, MCCL backed off its threat to downgrade supporters of the bill.

Several of the Republicans who promised me they would vote for the bill did not. Tony Kielkucki, the Deputy Secretary of State, went into the Republican caucus before the vote and told the members that Mary Kiffmeyer opposed the bill, something that he had failed to tell me or the public at a hearing where his arguments could be refuted.

Questions:

Did Mary Kiffmeyer participate in the MCCL strategy to kill ranked voting?