

Roberta Blomster's testimony for the Senate Local Government & Elections Committee on SF 1577 on February 1st, 2012

Thank you Mister Chair and members of the committee for allowing me to testify before you today. My name is Roberta Blomster and I'm one of the two Self-Advocate Mentors for Merrick, Inc. & currently serving on The Arc Greater Twin Cities Board of Directors.

I am here today to speak against SF 1577, which is one of the 2 Voter ID Constitutional Amendments that was introduced just recently. Voter ID is a very bad idea for this state's Disability Community. One of the main reasons is that adults with disabilities are having the hardest time with getting and/or keeping jobs during this tough economic time. There is a sky-higher unemployment rate across this country that has not even been brought up in the news and it's regarding people with disabilities and jobs since a lot of business don't want to hire us. You are expecting us to pay for the supporting documents needed for the Voter ID but if we are not working, then we won't have the money for the supporting documents such as a birth certificate. Another reason is transportation. How can people with disabilities get to the places that would administer Voter ID if they don't drive themselves and they don't have other transportation to fall on like their family members, Metro Mobility, etc. People with disabilities will be truly disenfranchised by this.

You will be turning voting from a right to a privilege and that is what scares the disability community in this state such as myself. If you want to be preventing something, then you should be working on this one recommendation from the Secretary of State's Disability Advocacy Workgroup (of which I'm still serving on): to prevent Felons from voting when their sentence is not yet cleared. There should be legislation on this issue so that we are sending a strong message to felons-Don't be voting when you should not be voting!

Right behind my testimony is the Fact Sheet from The Arc Minnesota on their stance against Voter ID for some more information.

I am open to any questions that you might have.

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