

Rep. Bobby Joe Champion introduced measure on alleged felony voter fraud; vetoed by Pawlenty

Written by

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State Rep. Bobby Joe Champion (DFL – Minneapolis), issued the following statement in response to a report alleging widespread voter fraud among felons:

“A report issued this week by Minnesota Majority claims that many ineligible felons cast ballots in the 2008 election. While I’m skeptical about the data, I am certainly concerned about anyone voting who is not eligible to vote in Minnesota. There has been confusion about when and if felons are allowed to vote. I authored a bill in 2010 that would address these concerns and lay out guidelines. The bill requires the Secretary of State to develop a comprehensive publication on the voting rights of individuals who have been charged with or convicted of a felony. This measure was passed on to Governor Pawlenty, who vetoed the bill.

I reintroduced the measure this year. It passed through several committees in the Minnesota House, but never received a hearing in the Minnesota Senate. The bill notifies felons of the status of their civil rights, which include the right to vote. When investigated, many of these infractions were not the result of willful disregard of the law, but rather confusion about the rules. My measure outlines specifically how, when and if felons are eligible to vote. We want all Minnesotans who have earned the right to vote to be fully informed of their rights and to be able to participate in the election process.

We cannot change what has happened in past elections, but with the 2012 election looming, we have an opportunity to install rules and guidelines to strengthen and improve our voting procedures. While there is no evidence of any widespread voter fraud, we have a responsibility to ensure that Minnesota’s election process continues to be a model for the nation.

I would urge the majority in the Minnesota House and Senate to make my legislation a top priority when the legislative session convenes on January 24.”