



## No Bad Ballots Committee

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### NEWS RELEASE

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# Better Ballot campaign lied about support from DFL Party League of Women Voters and President Obama – Fined \$5,000

(SAINT PAUL, MN) Advocates for instant run-off voting have wrongly claimed to have the endorsement of the Minnesota DFL Party, the League of Women Voters and President Obama according to the findings of facts and order from the State of Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings against the Better Ballot Campaign and Fair Vote Minnesota. The complaints were filed last month by Saint Paul residents Chuck Repke and Dann Dobson. The Better Ballot Campaign and Fair Vote Minnesota were found to have distributed information both groups knew in advance to be false to voters across the city.

The final paragraph of the report reads:

*Accordingly, the panel has concluded that the Respondent made knowingly false claims that the Minnesota DFL and the League of Women Voters “endorsed” the St. Paul ballot question and that it failed to obtain written permission from the national political figures before using their names as supporters of the ballot question, in violation of Minn. Stat. § 211B.02. The panel has concluded that these violations, which were reflected in approximately 40,000 pieces of campaign literature, were multiple and deliberate. They were made despite the clarity of the statutory prohibitions, and the Respondent remains completely unapologetic. The timing of these mailings made it difficult for opponents to respond before the election and created an unfair advantage. These false claims of support or endorsement likely influenced some voters, but the impact on the election cannot be quantified on this record. Under all the circumstances, the panel believes a fine in the amount of \$5,000 is the appropriate penalty.*

“Fair Vote Minnesota and the Better Ballot campaign used information they knew was false to confuse voters,” said Chuck Repke, co-chair of the No Bad Ballots committee. “It was wrong and it was a part of a pattern of distributing false information. In a city that prides itself on the

quality of our campaigns, it is beyond disappointing that these groups resorted to using a deception like this on an issue so important to the future of Saint Paul.” “Unfortunately, it will not be sent to the county attorney for prosecution.”

In the week before the election, the Better Ballot Campaign mailed two pieces of campaign literature that urged people to vote in favor of the ballot initiative that contained the false endorsements.

The first was a postcard on which George Latimer, Former Mayor of Saint Paul, outlined the reasons to support instant runoff voting and urged voters to: “Please vote YES for Instant Runoff Voting on November 3.” The corner on the front of the card reads: “P.S. Don’t just take my word for it, turn to see the broad-based support for IRV, including the League of Women Voters.” Approximately 10,000 of these were mailed.

The second piece of literature, an orange flyer, states in large letters “Vote Yes for Instant Runoff Voting Nov. 3.” At the top of the flyer, it states “DFL . . . Endorsed!” On the left side the card reads: “Endorsed by President Barack Obama & presidential candidates John McCain, Cynthia McKinney & Ralph Nader...[a]lso by the Minnesota DFL Party” and the “League of Women Voters of Saint Paul and Minnesota.” Respondent mailed approximately 30,000 of these flyers to voters in St. Paul on or about October 28, 2009.