

## THE PROPOSED CAUCUS PRESERVATION ACT

The residents in Lake Forest face an issue of urgent concern - a meaningful voice in City government. On Nov. 7, the Lake Forest Caucus will present to registered voters, an amendment to its bylaws. If passed, this amendment will eliminate our right to accept or reject both (1) the Caucus' recommended slate of candidates at its Annual Fall Meeting and (2) its recommended slate of Officers at the Spring Meeting. The Caucus has named this amendment the "Caucus Preservation Act" (CPA).

The title of the CPA is both deceptive and inaccurate. The Act "preserves" nothing, either for the Caucus or Lake Foresters. Instead, it gives the Caucus unchallenged power to select our governmental leaders and terminates our right to self-determination.

The Caucus claims the amendment is necessary to avoid "adverse influence" or "manipulative behavior" in its candidate approval process. This was a consistent theme after last year's vote, when a majority of residents who attended the Annual Meeting rejected the Caucus' recommendation for Mayor. The Caucus alleged then, as it is doing now, that people with "hidden agendas" unduly influenced or manipulated the vote. This allegation lacks any merit! People voted based on their knowledge of, experience with, or preference for the selected candidate. They voted as they have for the past 70 years, with their consciences and convictions. Voter motivation is irrelevant in democratically held elections.

The Caucus further claims that our votes simply have been ceremonial and even that our ability to vote was once non-existent. However, through its own written admissions in 1986, the Caucus stated "All or part of the slate can be rejected by majority vote at the Annual Meeting. The Committee on Candidates is then charged with presenting a new slate as soon as possible." There is no ambiguity in this policy. If the slated candidate is voted down, the Caucus must select someone else for presentation. This simply did not occur.

Voters already feel disengaged from an important Caucus process – the selection of our Ward Committee members. These members are pre-approved to run by the respective Ward Representatives on the Caucus Committee itself. This system fosters inherent bias and does not result in true voter representation. Consequently, if the CPA passes and we lose the right to affirm or reject our potential elected officials, Lake Foresters will lose all connection to the Caucus and City governance. This is not how democracy should work.

The cleverly titled Caucus Preservation Act seeks to remove permanently, the checks and balances on governance in Lake Forest. Our goal and the Caucus' goal should be to PRESERVE DEMOCRACY, not eradicate it!

We still have the opportunity to stop this misguided Act from passing. **On Nov. 7, 2023, please attend the meeting at Gordon Center, between the hours of 4:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and vote against the passage of the Caucus Preservation Amendment.** Let the Caucus know that our voices really matter!

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