

To: Senate Rules Committee

RE: SB 775

I live in Washington County, and I firmly believe that anyone should be legally able to run for Soil and Water Conservation District Director.

Tying these positions to land ownership requirements is a bit reminiscent of voting requirements in the early days of our nation. We find that odd and paternalistic in the case of who can cast a ballot. In the same way, these requirements seem antiquated.

Now more than ever we need the best-qualified candidates for this important work. The current limits restrict the pool and make unnecessary barriers to leadership opportunities for urban residents, conservationists who are not landowners, tenants - and most of all, for people of color who have suffered from a legacy of laws that exclude them.

This statutory update is practical, sensible, and long overdue, especially considering that there are no restrictions to run for any other special districts such as fire districts, school boards and the like.

Please support SB 775.

Thank you for your consideration.

Susan Mates