

WISCONSIN STATE
LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

2005-06

(session year)

Assembly

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on
Campaigns &
Elections
(AC-CE)

File Naming Example:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

- 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt01a
- 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt01b
- 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt02

Published Documents

➤ Committee Hearings ... CH (Public Hearing Announcements)

➤ **

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ **

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

➤ **

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ **

*Information Collected For Or
Against Proposal*

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤ **

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

**

➤ Hearing Records ... HR (bills and resolutions)

➤ **05hr_sb0249_AC-CE_pt01**

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ **

Griffiths, Terri

From: Richard, Rob
Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2005 9:23 AM
To: Griffiths, Terri
Subject: FW: Statement in Support of AB 542, SB 249

Attachments: Assembly Bill 542 and Senate Bill 249 Support.doc



Assembly Bill 542
and Senate B..

-----Original Message-----

From: Michele Sumara [mailto:msumara@hqeplaw.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2005 9:12 AM
To: Rep. Freese
Cc: Barbara Zack Quindel
Subject: Statement in Support of AB 542, SB 249

Rep. Freese,
Please find attached the statement in support of AB 542 and SB 249, of Barbara Zack Quindel, legal coordinator, Milwaukee Election Protection 2004.

We would greatly appreciate it if you would register Ms. Quindel's support of AB 542 and submit her attached statement to the record of today's public hearing, which we are unable to attend.

Thank you,
Michele Sumara

--

B. Michele Sumara
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To: Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

Date: September 1, 2005

I write to support Assembly Bill 542 and Senate Bill 249.

I served as legal coordinator of the 2004 Milwaukee Election Protection coalition. On November 2, 2004, 500 community volunteers, 90 law students and 118 attorneys working with the non-partisan Election Protection coalition observed voting in 92 Milwaukee polling places. In January, 2005, the Legal Committee of Milwaukee's Election Protection released *2004 Presidential Election Review: Report from Non-Partisan Observers of Voting in the General Election in the City Of Milwaukee on November 2, 2004*.

Our Report highlighted a number of significant administrative problems with the November 2d election in Milwaukee. What the hundreds of Election Protection observers did **not** observe was voter fraud. Rather, the problems we saw on Election Day - such as long lines, inaccessible sites, registration difficulties, and confusing instructions - were ones that tended to impede eligible voters' access to the polls.

Our *2004 Presidential Election Review* recommended an increase in elections staff both prior to major elections and on election day, improved poll worker training and communications, better polling place conditions, and provision of multilingual materials for non-English speaking citizens. The report also identified problems with absentee balloting, noting concern over the rate of rejection of absentee ballots resulting in voters not having their ballots counted.

Information from investigations conducted subsequent to our report have also found a need to strengthen and improve the administration of our elections. Adequately staffed polling places has emerged as a paramount concern of all who have studied the issue. This means not only increasing the number of poll workers, but also ensuring better training and operational planning so that all of the crucial tasks, including recordkeeping, are properly performed while reducing the waiting time for voters. To ensure that communities provide adequate staffing, we strongly support requiring a planning process, tailored to the anticipated needs of particular communities.

Assembly Bill 542 and Senate Bill 249 contain provisions for mandatory training, additional poll workers, and election day plans that specifically address these needs. We fully support these measures as responsive to the problems that we observed.

These bills also contain other provisions that correspond to recommendations in our report, including measures that would prevent ineligible felons from voting. We did not observe fraud in the November, 2004, election but did recommend strengthening and improving existing procedures that would deter individuals from committing election law violations. Including an affirmation on the registration form that an individual registering has not been convicted or is not currently on probation, parole, or extended supervision spells out the terms of the law in a manner far superior to the current form that simply affirms one's eligibility to vote. Poll list notations will also enable poll workers to determine on the spot whether a voter is ineligible due to a felony-related exclusion.

AB 542 and SB 249 contain proposals that would improve the casting and counting of absentee ballots. We support provisions that would allow for satellite locations to accommodate additional voters who wish to vote by absentee ballot. In addition, those bills provide for centralized absentee ballot counting. This is an extremely important reform that would allow absentee ballots to be handled by a separate group of election workers who could be specially trained in the laws governing absentee balloting. Our observers noted that poll workers were frequently overwhelmed by the task of processing absentee ballots during the course of their other duties on election day and were not fully trained in many of the details associated with the handling of these ballots. Separate handling of these ballots will improve the process and provide greater assurance that all eligible voters casting absentee ballots have their ballots counted and that there is an accurate record of these votes.

AB 542 and SB 249 present a comprehensive package of election reform that will improve election administration while maintaining Wisconsin's fair and open election procedures. This ensures that we can continue to maximize electoral participation and protect every citizen's right to vote.

Thank you.

Barbara Zack Quindel
Legal Coordinator
Milwaukee Election Protection 2004