

DUEY STROEBEL

STATE SENATOR • 20TH DISTRICT

Testimony on Assembly Bills 282, 268 & 269

Good morning. Thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt for hearing testimony on the Referendum Reform Initiative in your committee. As a group, the bills that make up the Referendum Reform Initiative seek to codify best practices, increase referendum transparency and raise public participation in these important issues in school districts throughout Wisconsin.

Today, this committee will hear testimony on three of these bills. All of the bills in the Referendum Reform Initiative rebalance the incentives to go to referendum.

In 2016 and the spring of 2017 elections, Wisconsin voters approved approximately \$2 billion of debt issuance for school projects. Total taxpayer cost to repay the debt will likely total \$3 billion or more. This is a staggering amount of debt, dwarfing the \$500 million in proposed transportation debt over the entire biennium, which has sparked intense reflection and debate. The state taxpayers fund a large portion of the revenue for our school districts; therefore, the state has enough skin in the game to ensure best practices.

You will hear a lot about “local control” today from opponents and I would like for you to consider what “local control” really means. Whether to take on debt or spend above a revenue limit is a decision for the local voters in a school district. This has been the case for decades. Increasing voter awareness, turnout and input in the referendum process enhances local control, especially when you consider voter turnout for a referendum held on a general election could be far higher than the turnout that elected the school board members attempting to assert local control.

A special election in December, put on the ballot at a special meeting of the school board, to spend above the revenue limits forever, is not a good process yet currently allowed. I encourage you to ask opponents of these bills to defend the current process, because this is the kind of “local control” they want to defend.

AB 282

Assembly Bill 282 brings additional transparency and public participation on the front end of the referendum process. While high turnout in the election is very important, the deliberation process should start before this time. The bill requires a resolution to place a capital referendum question on the ballot must be entertained at a high turnout annual meeting. Specifically, the bill requires consideration at the annual meeting for issue debt referenda and at a regular monthly meeting for revenue limit override referenda.

Any responsible school board member will tell you your chances of successfully convincing the voters of a district to pass a referendum go dramatically up if there is community engagement and buy-in. This should include an open and robust discussion at a meeting that will be well attended. The annual meeting is the gold standard for public participation and a decision as important as borrowing substantial sums of money should be discussed here first.

Due to the logistics of levy formulation and school aid payments, operating referenda would benefit from more flexibility and the bill allows them to be considered at any regular monthly meeting. I submit

opposition to AB 282 encourages lower public participation and poor planning by the school board. If administrators and board members know they need to plan and get their referendum resolution done on a particular timeline, the end product will be better.

AB 268

~~Assembly Bill 268 improves accountability to the taxpayers in the long run by taking away the vehicle in current law where a tax increase can be hidden from the public via baseline budgeting. Currently a recurring operating referendum is a 'forever' referendum. A majority of any size, on any election date, for a tax increase of any size, raises taxing authority forever and cannot be undone.~~

Let me repeat, a recurring referendum tax increase cannot be undone by the school board or electorate.

Recurring referendum authorization is built into future revenue limit numbers and becomes indistinguishable from what was the former revenue limit. This makes no sense. All other referendum questions have an end date in sight, either when the debt service is completed or when the operating referendum question expires. Recurring referendums serve one purpose, to be a one-way ratchet wherein levy limits get irrevocably increased despite potential changes in circumstance.

AB 268 would impose a five year limit on operating referenda and convert previously passed recurring referenda into five year nonrecurring referenda. Returning to the taxpayers every five years to show the results of the increased levy authority and seek a fresh mandate will serve to produce a better product and efficient school district finances.

AB 269

Spring and fall general elections are when all final decisions in our democracy are made. We elect constitutional officers, the legislature and local government officials at these elections, even when they are unopposed. The only major decision not bound by this common sense policy is school referenda. They may currently be placed on low turnout primaries or on special elections. The bill provides an exception for natural disasters or other emergencies.

According to the Wisconsin Elections Commission, the average voter turnout (2004 – 2016) in a November general election is 60.58%. For a spring general election the voter turnout rate has recently gotten as high as 47%. Special elections and primaries are lower, sometimes substantially so. Recent voter turnout in spring primaries have averaged 12%-17%.

Seeking maximum voter participation in a referendum is a best practice and I struggle to think of a good reason to avoid a general election. One is left with the impression that the goal of a school board putting a major borrowing decision on a primary or special election isn't to seek the consent of the public, but to more easily circumvent the requirement to gather that consent.

Taken as a package the Referendum Reform Initiative is an opportunity to bring unprecedented transparency and public participation to this area of the law. Taxpayers, teachers and students all benefit from active community involvement and financial support of our public schools. The best way to foster this cooperation and involvement is to codify best practices.

Thank you for considering testimony this morning. My Assembly colleague coauthors and I will be happy to answer any questions.



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BARABOO

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Baraboo, WI 53913
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To: Assembly Education Committee

June 15, 2017

From: Doug Mering Baraboo School Board Member

Subject: Referendum Bills AB282, AB268 and AB269 Against

Thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the Assembly Education Committee.

Today, I want to tell you of a Wisconsin success story that has been achieved through referendums. In 2014 after a fairly lengthy community discussion and education campaign Baraboo passed a maintenance, safety, and building upgrade referendum. Then last November 2016 after another fairly lengthy community discussion and education campaign we passed another referendum this time for the renovation and upgrade of our high school facility. This will involve significant upgrades to our Family Consumer Science, **STEM**(Science, Tech, Engineering and Math) and Technical Education classrooms. The Baraboo community has shown a commitment to investing in all of our students. It is Baraboo's belief that those investments will help not only our students but also many of the School Districts' local businesses in the hospitality and manufacturing industries who are in need of a qualified workforce.

Baraboo is one of the lowest twenty percent in spending per student in the State of Wisconsin. What I have always said is that I want our Baraboo students to be above average but we could do a better job of achieving that goal if our spending was only average. We have avoided going to referendum for operational purposes but I know we are at the end of our rope with any tools or methods to reduce costs without reducing staff. Until the state approves such things as the Governor's education budget and the Assembly's proposal to lift the low revenue ceiling then Baraboo will need to continue to rely on referendums not only for maintenance but also for operational purposes too.

School districts do not go to referendum lightly and for the following reasons I believe the Assembly should not legislate against local control and hope that you vote against AB282, AB268 and AB269;

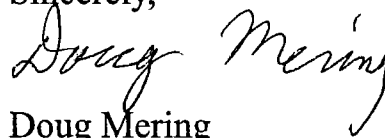
AB282- In the interest of transparency we hold our annual meeting after the third Friday count in September. Because of this additional bureaucratic interference of AB282 it would greatly complicate a referendum process when the referendum elections are held in November or April. In the case of a November referendum the public would have to wait 11 months before bonds could be issued and a April referendum would have to wait 5 months. The voters have already made their decision so why hold up this bond issuing process. Let the locally elected school board make the decision on how to get the most competitive bonds possible. That is what the public elected us to do.

Rather than create another infringement on local control it would be better if school funding formula would actually be reformed. This would be a better use of the legislatures' time than the continuous tweaking of the education portion of the state budget or creating additional barriers to locally elected school boards.. This has been a Democratic and a Republican problem which is one school districts across the State of Wisconsin face when figuring out their budgets every two years. Recurring referendums have oftentimes occurred because the legislature has not confronted this issue. These referendum bills including AB268 do not solve this issue of the school funding formula which needs to be reformed. Without that reform action then school districts will need to go to referendum to continue to function for even the most basic of educational staffing and maintenance needs.

Lastly, AB269 of when we can set the referendum votes is another infringement on local control. Note as school board members if we are irresponsible with how we create referendums and when we have them, then the voters have the opportunity to vote its members out of office. This happened in Baraboo after two failed referendums in 2006 which resulted in major turnover in the Baraboo School Board membership over the next three years.

Referendums are passing at high levels because communities have been convinced that these funds are required to meet the needs of their community and students. The level of referendums will drop significantly if the State of Wisconsin will get behind real school funding reform. Unfortunately, none of these bills address this reform and only creates further bureaucratic big government restriction of local government. Because of these reasons it is my belief that the Assembly Education Committee should vote down these three referendum bills.

Sincerely,



Doug Mering
Vice President
Baraboo School Board



**Green Bay Area
Public School District**

Engagement. Equity. Excellence.

200 South Broadway | Green Bay, WI 54303
Phone: (920) 448-2000 | www.gbaps.org

June 15, 2017

Hello. I'm Brenda Warren, School Board President for the Green Bay Area Public School District. Today I'm **speaking against Assembly Bill 282 (and AB 268 below)**.

This past April, the Green Bay Area Public School District passed two referendum questions. The first was a non-recurring, \$16.5 million operational referendum for ten years so that we will have the resources to continue the programs, services and course offerings that have shown to be successful and necessary for the success of our diverse student population. This was our district's very first operational referendum.

The second question asked voters to support a \$68.25 million referendum for a variety of construction projects in 18 of our school buildings to address overcrowding, security, and adequate space for programs.

I want to describe for you the process we used to successfully pass these referenda. After conducting a facilities master plan over the course of 2016, our work began in earnest last September. Board members, District administration and staff held four community listening sessions attended by several hundred people. This was followed by a citizen-led Facility Task Force that met through the months of October and into November. The results of both the listening session feedback and citizen led task force were posted on our website. In January we held three widely publicized school board meetings which were preceded by an open forum. At these meetings our board discussed all of the options pertaining to both referendum questions. These meetings were very much working meetings and all of our discussions were held in open session.

Two of these meetings were our regularly scheduled January board meetings and then we held a special board meeting on January 23 to vote on the final resolutions. We did this so that we would have ample time earlier in January to discuss all our options and get timely community feedback on the options put on the table after each meeting. Again, this final board meeting was very well publicized throughout the month of January and all three were very well attended.

Beginning in February, Board members, district administration and staff spent countless hours providing tours for community members, conducting interviews with the media, and attending many community and school functions. In addition, we presented details and answered questions about our 2 referendum questions at more than 70 community meetings.

In addition to this work, our community members and parents worked tirelessly to support the referenda. In the end, our community supported both questions by 63% (operational) and 70% (facilities).

I've provided a link below to an April 2017 editorial by the *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. The editorial takes a position against the proposed legislation that would limit and/or modify successfully passed referenda and points to Green Bay Area Public Schools as an example of why the changes are unnecessary. The editorial states, "Green Bay School Board did an excellent job of letting the public know that it was interested in putting a school referendum on the April ballot. It discussed the matter with the public for over a month, adjusting what [sic] the details of the referendum before the School Board approved it. There was no surprise... vote."

School districts across the state have been managing school district finances and facility needs under the rules set by the Legislature. The requirements placed on school districts (not on cities or counties) to have to seek voter approval to increase revenue or for borrowing to address major facility projects have made the work of school boards and administrators more challenging as evidenced by my description of the hundreds of hours of work (and resources) it took to educate and convince our community to support our referendum questions.

We request to be allowed to make decisions that are best for our local school district. We know that our referenda will not pass without extensive community engagement especially in a large district like ours, so limiting when we can make these decisions will have no impact on our voter participation. We made sure we had excellent voter engagement throughout our process.

Thank you.

Assembly Bill 268—speaking against

I would also like to briefly comment on Assembly bill 268. I hope my testimony about the enormous effort it takes to get referenda passed, and the financial and human resource investment that is required, has helped you understand why we are opposed to AB 268. Our community very clearly supported our District referenda and supported our operational referendum for 10 years. It does not seem right that the legislature in Madison should have the power to usurp our community's voice, especially when going to referendum more often (every five years) just takes resources out of our classrooms.

Thank you very much for your time.

Brenda Warren
bbwarren@gbaps.org
(920) 246-1503

Link to Green Bay Press Gazette article April 22, 2017:

<http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/story/opinion/editorials/2017/04/22/keep-school-referendum-decisions-local/100763680/>

From: Kevin M. Bobolz 10600 S Richard Rd Oak Creek, WI 53154

To: Wisconsin Senate and Assembly members

Cc: Jesse Rodriguez, Assembly District 21

Re: Support of, and testimony for WI SB 195/AB 268, SB 191/AB 282, and SB 194/AB 269

About me:

Originally from the Clinton, WI area, I will most likely return there when I retire from my current occupation in Milwaukee. Currently a current resident of Oak Creek, WI, I have lived and worked in several states, and have witnessed the tactics and bending of the rules by local school boards both where I grew up and own property, and where I currently reside, to pass school referenda. In both examples, referenda were voted down, but various tactics were used to simply keep bringing back the vote until they were able to get it to pass.

SB 195/AB 268 – Eliminating Recurring Referendum Question

Wisconsin, despite improvements in state taxes and spending over the past few years, remains a place that burdens its' residents by taking a larger share of their hard earned income than 39 of other states.¹ Other studies place the burden Wisconsin imposes even higher, at the 5th worst in the country.²

A key driver of this our state's numerous layers of local government that may individually impose taxes upon its residents, without regards to the aggregate effect. In addition, local governmental bodies operate outside the realm of reality when it comes to budgeting and spending. Add to that, the near lack of media spotlights and government watchdogs upon local and school government that state and national governmental bodies experience and you have a system begging to be abused.

As we see in the current discussions over transportation funding in this state, funding public services and having everyone agree is hard. It is meant to be. It is not supposed to be easy to proclaim government's "right" to the hard work that others have performed.

Despite over \$11,000 per year in pupil finding (from state and local sources)³, most school districts simply refuse to keep their fiscal house in order. Find any business that is allowed to impose a price increase on all of its' customers because some customers said that it is OK. Better yet, find any other instance in the real world that utilizes baseline budgeting that simply assumes an increase in revenue, or in this case, that revenue increases will be permanent, and will continue to build upon one another into perpetuity.

These are the assumptions that continue to make our great state a tax hell. It is not supposed to be easy to take someone else's money. To make it easy contributes to profligate spending and a lack of accountability. Every day in my business, sales people need to convince customers to buy our product. That sale now entitles me to return to our customer next week to again convince them of the value of our products and purchase more of them. Our government should be held to no lower standard. They need to convince us of the value of the services they provide, and ask that we support them. If not every week, then at least every year.

Against my better judgment, the state of Wisconsin allows school districts to exceed local revenue limits through local referenda. This should not, however, be considered the ability to permanently impose a burden on all future generations. While I would prefer that every local school district should be required to renew requests to over spend revenue limits each year, this proposal to require that they sunset in five years is the next best thing.

For the above reasons, I would like to register my support for SB 195/AB 268, and thank Sen. Stroebel for his insightfulness in drafting them, and you for supporting them.

1. <https://wallethub.com/edu/states-with-highest-lowest-tax-burden/20494/>
2. <https://www.forbes.com/pictures/emeg45ehhij/no-47-wisconsin/#6ec4ad4b2d1d>
3. <http://watchdog.org/270963/wisconsin-per-pupil-spending-still-national-average/>

SB 191/AB 282 – Operating Referendum called only at Regular Meeting & Issue Debt Referendum called only at Annual Meeting

On a regular basis, we hear the drumbeat that higher levels of participation by the electorate, is a benefit to our society. That societal benefit seems to end at the ballot box however, as once in office, most elected (and non-elected) government officials would quite frankly prefer that they only hear from those that support their lines of thinking.

I can only imagine how annoying it must be to receive comments and communications from your masses of constituents, especially if they do not agree with you.

There are two school districts that I have had involvement in over my time in Wisconsin. The first, where I grew up, and the second where I reside currently, in Oak Creek WI.

Over the years, I have watched district referenda come up for a vote either in the spring after general elections, or over the summer, during sparsely attended summer meetings. These allowed each school board to begin planning on how to best “present” these to the public without serious public scrutiny and discussion on the merits of the referenda. Special meetings are the next vehicle. Special meetings, away from the prying eyes of the public and nearly non-existent local media, have provided the perfect space to bring up and approve spending or bonding referenda without having to be subjected to public scrutiny.

Most annual meetings occur in the late fall, and for any governmental organization interested in truly serving the public and maintain transparency, the annual meeting or its equivalent, are the only places that decisions of significant local fiscal impact should be considered.

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ELECTORATE
OF THE
OAK CREEK-FRANKLIN JOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT, OAK CREEK, WI**

**Monday, October 12, 2015
5:30 p.m.**

**District Administration Building
7630 South Tenth Street
Oak Creek, WI 53154**

AGENDA

1. **Special Meeting Called to Order by School Board President Frank Carini.**
2. **Election of Chairperson for the Special Meeting.**
3. **Resolution on Purchase of Real Estate Property:**

Be it resolved by the electors of the Oak Creek-Franklin School District that, pursuant to section 120.08(2), Wisconsin Statutes and section 120.10(5m) of the Wisconsin statutes, the Oak Creek-Franklin School Board (“Board”) is authorized to acquire, by purchase or condemnation under ch. 32, real estate and structures and facilities appurtenant to such real estate necessary for school district purposes..

The specification and identification of the property is as follows:

Parcel 2 of Certified Map No. 6874, being a part of the Northeast ¼ of the Northeast ¼ of Section 33, in Township 5 North, Range 22 East, in the City of Oak Creek, County of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, dated August 14, 2000 and recorded in the Register of Deeds Office for Milwaukee County on October 12, 2000 in Vol. 4923 of Certified Survey Maps, on Pages 345192 to 345198 including, as Document No. 7975166.

Further be it resolved by the electors of the Oak Creek-Franklin School District that the authorization to purchase the property described above is at the terms and conditions authorized by the Oak Creek-Franklin School District for the purpose of implementing a home construction project and such authorization shall not exceed a cost of \$64,000.00.

4. **Adjournment**

Kathleen Borchardt, School Board Clerk

For the above reasons, I would like to register my support for SB 191/AB 282, and thank Sen. Stroebel for his insightfulness in drafting them, and you for supporting them.

SB 194/AB 269 –General Election Dates for Referendum Questions

In 1998, I returned to my family farm near Clinton, WI to help develop a plan to oppose a local school referendum. The district planned and held a referendum for a new high school (in a district of declining enrollment) for the fall general election in 1998. The referendum failed. They returned sometime later to repeat a slight revised version of the referendum to be held during a special election, where it passed.

Items of importance should be held when the largest number of taxpayers has the opportunity to weigh in. Common strategy for school districts, especially upon losing a referendum ballot is to reschedule the vote for a time when the calculation is that the lowest number of people will vote. This allows them to best mobilize their constituent audience (teachers and other school employees) in the district to begin their own “get out the vote effort”. If it is important, there is no reason that a governmental body needs to call a special election in order to time a vote to benefit their own interests.

Wisconsin special elections average around 12-17% participation of eligible voters, while general elections range from 47-60%. Initiatives to raise our taxes deserve at least the same consideration given to electing our government officials.

For the above reasons, I would like to register my support for SB 194/AB 269, and thank Sen. Stroebel for his insightfulness in drafting them, and you for supporting them.

I thank you for your time in reading this and your vote to support all of these initiatives.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Bobolz

Oak Creek, WI

Kim Kaukl
Executive Director
1755 Oakwood Circle
Plain, WI 53577
Cell Phone: (608) 553-0689
kimkaukl@wirsa.org



President, Ken Kasinski CESA12
President-Elect, Robert Smudde
Secretary, Diana Bohman,
Regional Public Library Rep
Treasurer, Jerry Walters CESA11
Past President, Jeremy Biehl CESA 5

June 15, 2017

Members of the Assembly Education Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify on AB 268, 269 and 282. I am Kim Kaukl the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WIRSA) an organization of 200 plus members with 150 school districts and several CESAs, technical colleges, universities, business and individual members. WIRSA represents the students, administrators, teachers, school board members and community of our rural schools.

I am here today to register our opposition to AB 268, 269 and 282. These bills can be very damaging to public school districts especially the numerous rural districts in our state. With the financial constraints on public schools, referendums and community support are the keys that are keeping many of the rural districts alive. In our rural communities, referendums have become a part of the school's budgeting cycle due to the limited funding at the State level. The proposed dollars in the Governors education budget are helpful, but this funding would only bring us back to 2011 levels meaning many districts will still need to run referendums. Therefore, it is important for legislators to leave referendums up to local control and let each district decide what is best for them. In recent years, referenda have been supported locally with over 70% success. This rate shows how important and valued public education is to each of these communities. With the limitations on borrowing along with the proposed restrictions in these bill, this could virtually put some districts and communities in a precarious state. So, ask yourself, what is the need and reason for these three proposed bills? Is it to restrict local control or is this to protect certain special interest groups?

It is our belief that the points below need to be considered:

- These bills are anti-local control.
- With limited funding, referenda are the way many districts can access resources. These proposals will significantly impact declining enrollment districts which are often small rural school districts many of which need referenda to maintain educational opportunities for children. These bills, if adopted, could have the effect of forcing districts to consider dissolving or consolidating if they cannot pass a referendum and would dictate when they could go to voters.
- This bill will further exacerbate the trend of creating "Haves" and "Have Nots". Opportunities for students will further be determined by their zip code.
- These bills are restrictive and inflexible for school boards.
- Limiting referendum date selection for capital projects such as new buildings, renovations or additions will reduce the effective planning of these projects to meet the needs of students and citizens. What's more, a poorly-timed referendum date could add to the construction time-frame and possibly increase costs to taxpayers.
- We also find it interesting that when you look at the co-sponsors for these bills there are no truly rural legislators showing support. Could that be that they understand the negative impact these restrictions will have on their districts?

You have heard from many educators and board members. You have heard the concerns that they have with these bills. As we have testified in the past, referendums are about local control and should be left that way. Local voters know what is best for their communities. We ask that you support the right to local control and oppose AB 282, 268 and 269. Thank you for listening.

Thank you,

Kim Kaukl
Executive Director
Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance
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SCHOOL DISTRICT OF FLORENCE COUNTY
WE POSITIVELY AFFECT THE LIVES OF CHILDREN



June 15, 2017

School Board
 Don Dumke, President
 Jim Gehlhoff, Vice-President
 Ron Yadro, Clerk
 Jim Churchill, Treasurer
 Tom Jonet, Member
 Shawn McLain, Member
 Linda Opsahl, Member

Members of the Assembly Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today on Assembly Bills 268, 269 and 282. I am Ben Niehaus, District Administrator for the School District of Florence County.

I commend you and your colleagues on the proposed measures of support in the funding of our schools in the upcoming budget. Unfortunately, none of the proposed referendum bills will help our students, and will only create more red tape for boards of education and school administrators to dance around in the referendum process. These bills will further erode local control of elected officials that represent their public.

To illustrate the detrimental impact of these bills, I will provide a synopsis of the story of the School District of Florence County. In 2005, as many throughout this state know, Florence Schools nearly dissolved. Many of the reasons for this were due to matters beyond local control. Florence County saw an exodus local industries, which further compounded declining enrollments that all schools were experiencing; Florence schools lost more than 200 of their 800 students in a two-year window. Florence County, arguably the most conservative county in the state of Wisconsin, had seen its boards levy conservatively prior to revenue caps, and therefore is challenged yet to this day because of these decisions. There is complete transparency, and openness, within the borders of Florence County. It's no secret that this proposed legislation is being driven due to what some propose as the abuse of the referendum process beyond northern Wisconsin. If this is the perception elsewhere, then I suggest that local control and the process of democracy should prevail. Too often it is not just Florence County, but all of northern Wisconsin, that is forgotten in decisions that are made due to matters "south of Hwy 29" as northern Wisconsin residents refer to, and we deal with the fallout of unintended consequences...this entire conversation is just another example. Please think about how any of the referendum bills could impact northern Wisconsin schools and students. Schools in northern Wisconsin have a disproportionate reliance on referendums due to the diseconomies of scale of operating small schools over sparsely populated areas.

If Assembly Bill 269 existed in 2005, the School District of Florence County, the county's lone school district, would not be here today. The seven (7) School of Recognition Awards earned, a *US News Best High School in America Award*, the implementation of a Fab Lab in partnership with UW-Stout, the establishment of a regional learning center with Northeast Wisconsin Technical College to provide post-secondary options for Florence and three other regional schools, 296 postsecondary credits

Post Office Box 440, Florence, Wisconsin 54121

<u>District Administrator</u> Ben Niehaus 715-528-1189 Fax 715-528-5338 niehausb@myflorence.org	<u>Director of Pupil Services</u> Vanessa Schimmelpfenning 715-528-1140 Fax 715-528-5338 schimmelpfenningv@myflorence.org	<u>Principal - High School</u> Brandon Jerue 715-528-1150 Fax 715-528-5330 jerueb@myflorence.org	<u>Principal - Elementary</u> Neil Hall 715-528-1142 Fax 715-528-5910 halln@myflorence.org	<u>Financial Manager</u> Dawn Cote 715-528-1176 Fax 715-528-5338 coted@myflorence.org
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earned by the 30 graduates of the class of 2017, in addition to School Report Cards that do not just meet, but exceed, state expectations, would not have happened if this bill existed in 2005. Can anyone guarantee that there could not be another Florence, where due to matters beyond a board's control, a school and community would be hindered in when, and how, it could address the needs of its local school district?

Assembly Bill 282 would limit school boards when it could go before its voters to authorize a resolution for the issuance of a bond or when to vote on a resolution to proceed to referendum. I find this perplexing, so let me share two timelines for illustration of how this bill would impede an already thorough and transparent process.

First, of what's before Florence County right now -- we are planning for our fourth, consecutive upcoming operating referendum that our taxpayers are expecting at this coming fall's, special election; our four most recent referendums have been passed at fall elections, whether regular or special. The reason for this is that even a fall special for Florence County provides better opportunity for its taxpayers to voice their opinion, as numerous residents are retired and leave after Thanksgiving or Christmas, and some do not return until later in April; more residents are in Florence County to go to the polls in early November than early April. The Florence County School Board desires going to the polls when voters can best voice their opinion.

If AB 282 limits us to only passing resolutions at regular meetings we will have a conundrum in the moment. This is due to what is before you as our state representatives right now, the state budget process. Even if I could leave Madison today with the assurance of what the next state budget will be, we will not pass a resolution without the utilization of our August special meeting. I'll explain.

We are anxiously awaiting for the state budget, so at our August 2 budget committee meeting, we can best determine what our financial needs are. It's best for us to wait until our fiscal year is done, along with our audit which is in mid-July, so we can be as accurate and transparent as possible to our public of our financial status. We are looking to pass a resolution at our August special meeting, two weeks after our budget committee meeting, so as to be sure we have our resolution submitted more than 70 days in advance. If we wait until our August regular meeting, we'd be within 24 hours of the 70 day timeline; we don't desire to risk such an important decision in the case that something beyond the Board's control occurred. There is a very transparent timeline for the consideration of a resolution for referendum. These decisions are not taken lightly in Florence County, or in any other school district I would assume, and don't just happen overnight.

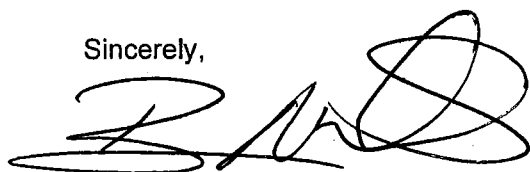
The same can be true for the issuance of a bond, even more so. We began the process of addressing our aging high school facility in January of 2015, two and one-half years ago. We began by posting RFP's to interview, and ultimately select an architect and construction manager...this alone was a four month process. We then formed a community task force of nearly 20 individuals that met 13 times over a 10 month period, then created a community survey over two months, distributing the survey,

compiling results and finally representatives of the community task force making a recommendation back to the school board for what to propose for a capital project. Subsequently a resolution was passed at a special meeting of the board, and Florence County passed a \$14.5 million capital referendum to renovate our high school at the fall, Presidential election. Only then, did we then begin the bond rating process. Our bond rating was the best that could be achieved by a small, rural district at AA- via Standards and Poor's. Hence, along with ideal market conditions, we secured bonding at an interest rate that will see Florence County taxpayers save \$600,000 in interest paid over the 20 year amortization versus our best pre-referendum estimates. This illustrates why another proposed referendum bill, Assembly Bill 187, is irrelevant, and simply creates more red tape and confusion; we can't accurately predict interest rates due to final bond ratings and markets. *What I just shared is two and one-half years of work.* Resolutions needs to be passed when best determined locally. If AB 282 existed during this process, we would have had to pass an initial resolution at an annual meeting the year prior to a vote; we didn't even have a scope of the project in any form at that time, let alone any idea of a project cost. I ask, what would this have accomplished?

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today and share Florence County's story. These bills simply create more red tape for school administration and locally elected boards to dance around, and will do nothing short of creating confusion for voters. Any referendum process is already grueling enough, that when done right, takes months and months of planning and seeing through specific and intricate processes in timelines, all balanced against many other responsibilities in the operation of a public school. Please let locally elected boards of education have the flexibility they desire, the same as you desire, when the federal government tries to impose upon our great state of Wisconsin. I ask that you oppose all the referendum bills, specifically AB 268, 269 and 282.

Thank you all for your time and service to Wisconsin, and the numerous supportive initiatives that are being proposed from the Assembly in helping all Wisconsin schools Positively Affect the Lives of Children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Niehaus', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Ben Niehaus, District Administrator

DAVE MURPHY

State Representative • 56th Assembly District

Rep. Dave Murphy
Testimony on AB 282/SB 191
Assembly Committee on Education, June 15, 2017

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for hearing Assembly Bill 282 today.

Senator Stroebel and I feel strongly that it's crucial to have public involvement in decisions pertaining to our taxes, especially if they are being increased. We want referendum questions discussed at meetings with higher public attendance, so we drafted this bill.

AB 282 requires that a school board pass a resolution in order to go to referendum at certain times:

Issue debt referenda: annual meeting. If a unified school district doesn't have an annual meeting requirement, we create a one month window to coincide with annual meetings for most districts.

-If the district doesn't have annual meetings, you can do this during the period when annual meetings happen, mid-July through mid-August

Levy override referenda: regular meeting, not a special meeting, which is allowed now.

The public should be involved at school board meetings to discuss the placement of the referendum on the ballot in the first place. In 2016, Wisconsin passed \$1.3 billion of issue debt, which is the principle debt authorized by all school referenda in that one year. Attendance is highest at the annual meeting and major construction decisions should be vetted at this time.

Special school board meetings are sparsely attended and may not be well advertised or noticed.

Taxpayers need a voice when it comes to being additionally taxed. We should maximize the chances for that voice to be heard by addressing this economic decision process with the most people aware of the issue and present to offer their views.

I ask your support for this bill.

Thank you.



"Leadership in Public School Governance"

JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

122 W. WASHINGTON AVENUE, MADISON, WI 53703
PHONE: 608-257-2622 FAX: 608-257-8386

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Education
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, WASB Government Relations Director
DATE: June 15, 2017
RE: **OPPOSITION to ASSEMBLY BILL 282**, relating to restricting consideration of resolutions to issue bonds by common and union high school districts and prohibiting voting on a resolution to exceed the revenue limit of a school district at a special meeting.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB), on behalf of all 422 public school boards in the state of Wisconsin, **has strong concerns about** Assembly Bill 282.

First some background. There are two types of school district referendums in Wisconsin: 1) Bonding – asking authority to borrow for capital projects; and 2) Operational – asking to exceed the revenue limits to pay for school district operations. There are also four types of school districts in Wisconsin: common (*most fall under this category*); union high school (*these 10 districts operate a high school with separate K-8 feeder districts and are most common in SE Wisconsin*) and unified (46). Milwaukee is a First Class City district, its own unique classification. Common school districts and union high school districts have an annual meeting at which district electors have certain powers. District electors may attend, speak and vote on certain matters, including voting to approve the tax levy, at this meeting. Unified districts do not have annual meetings and the school board, which is directly responsible to the electors, has the powers and duties of the annual meeting in common and union districts. The powers of the annual meeting are unified in these boards, hence the name.

Our attorneys raised several issues with the drafting of the bill:

- Section 3 of the bill appears to be drafted in a way that limits unified districts to a one-month window in July and August for approving an initial resolution to begin the bonding referendum process but imposes no similar limit on common or union high school district school boards. It does, however, limit the electors of a common or union school district from directly initiating a bonding referendum, outside of the annual meeting. We are not aware of a referendum ever being directly initiated by the electors.
- The added text in Section 5 appears to prohibit the electors of common or union high school districts from voting at a special district meeting on an operational referendum. This provision is odd since electors at an annual meeting have no statutory authority to initiate operational referenda. That authority is given to school boards.

Drafting issues aside, we do not support this bill either as drafted or as intended on policy grounds. Assembly Bill 282 is an attempt by lawmakers' to "micromanage" school districts and school boards. The bill infringes on local control by attempting to dictate to locally elected school board members when they may discuss and vote on issues that are the integral to the core duties of school board members, the "care, control and management of the property and affairs of the school district." It tries to stack the deck and make the referendum process more difficult for school districts by limiting when referendum resolutions may be voted on.

The logic of restricting special board meetings on school district referenda is puzzling. Special meetings are subject to the same open meetings notification requirements as regular meetings. They can better highlight a referendum question when that is the only item on the agenda of a special meeting as opposed to being one item amid a host of regular school district business items at a regular meeting.

The bedrock principle of our membership and association is the belief that the locally-elected school board should have control of its local fiscal affairs. The state should provide maximum authority and flexibility to our local school board officials to manage the affairs of their school districts.

For these reasons, today we must state our opposition to Assembly Bill 282.



School Administrators Alliance

Representing the Interests of Wisconsin School Children

TO: Assembly Committee on Education
FROM: John Forester, Executive Director
DATE: June 15, 2017
RE: AB 282 – Relating to resolution to issue bond by high school districts and prohibit voting to exceed the revenue limit of a school district at a special meeting.

The School Administrators Alliance (SAA) opposes Assembly Bill 282, relating to the consideration of a resolution to issue bond by common and union high school districts and prohibiting voting on a resolution to exceed the revenue limit of a school district at a special meeting.

As justification for their introduction of the six-bill Referendum Reform Initiative, the authors of several of the bills sought to paint a picture of school referenda and school borrowing run amuck and out of control.

I would like to begin my testimony using a different brush to paint a picture with a much broader perspective than that provided by these authors.

The information I am using to paint that broader perspective comes from a presentation made by representatives of Robert W. Baird & Company earlier this month at the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials (WASBO) Spring Conference. The actual data used in the Baird presentation is from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). I have attached six charts to my testimony.

The first chart shows historical annual bond authorizations from 1995-2017 (year-to-date). This chart replicates the inflation-adjusted data the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance used in one of their recent publications on school referenda. The biggest takeaway from this chart is the amount authorized in the 8 years from 1995-2002 (\$6.0 billion) is more than the amount authorized in the past 15 years from 2003-2017 (\$5.9 billion). And regarding the spike in 2016, it is important to note that 49% of the amount authorized went to 10 larger school districts.

The second chart highlights the annual bond authorizations and debt levies since 1995. It shows that despite the peaks and valleys in annual bond authorizations, the annual debt levies have been relatively level each of the past 18 years.

The third chart highlights the level of future debt service. It shows that even with the larger 2016 bond authorizations, the future annual referendum debt service (Fund 39) is showing a significant

drop in payments going forward. This is to be expected as we approach the end of the 20-year payment periods for debt authorized in the last major facility funding cycle from 1995-2000. Clearly, this is one big reason many school districts have been evaluating long-range facility needs in recent years. Other reasons include low interest rates, construction cost inflation, deferred capital investment post-Act 10 and the impact of the 2008-09 economic downturn.

In contrast to a school debt referendum picture with an endless runaway upward trend line, these charts illustrate a process that when viewed over a 20+ year time period is very cyclical in nature. It also appears to be a process that has been carefully managed over that time period as well.

The next three pages in the packet provide a breakdown of Wisconsin school district referendum history from 2000 to 2017 year-to-date. It shows the number of each question type (debt issue, nonrecurring operational and recurring operational) and pass/fail rates for each election date. Some important takeaways from this chart relate to special elections. Over the past 10 years (2008-2017), there have only been 90 referendum questions decided on a special election date. In the previous 8-year period (2000-2007), there were 264 referendum questions decided on a special election date. From what I understand, the late 1990s saw even heavier use of special election dates.

Why the major change in the usage of special election dates? A couple of reasons come readily to mind. First, as the fiscal situation tightened under revenue caps, paying the costs of a special election became prohibitive for more and more school districts. Second, recent data is pretty clear that referendum pass percentage rates are higher in higher turnout elections.

The final attachment to my testimony highlights the total number of operational referendums from 1995-2017. The takeaways from operational referendums decided in this period include:

- 336 districts statewide have needed to seek additional funding via operational referendum. 254 have been successful.
- 418 of 689 nonrecurring operational questions were approved by voters (61%)
- 189 of 489 recurring operational questions were approved by voters (39%)

Despite the time and energy spent to inform the public and place 1,178 operational referendum questions on the ballot since 1995, there are only about \$300 million worth of authorizations that were active in 2016-17. This act of local control represents only about 3% of the total statewide revenue limit authority including all exemptions.

In anticipation of this hearing, I sought input on AB 282 from a cross-section of SAA members with an emphasis on school superintendents and school business officials. I also discussed the bill with one of the finest school attorneys in the state. In general, we found the bill, as drafted, confusing. We are also left asking a couple of questions. What problem is the bill intended to solve? Is the bill drafted accurately to address that objective? We have the following concerns:

- It appears that the authors intended to require that the adopting of an initial resolution to raise money through a bond issue by common and union high school districts must be made

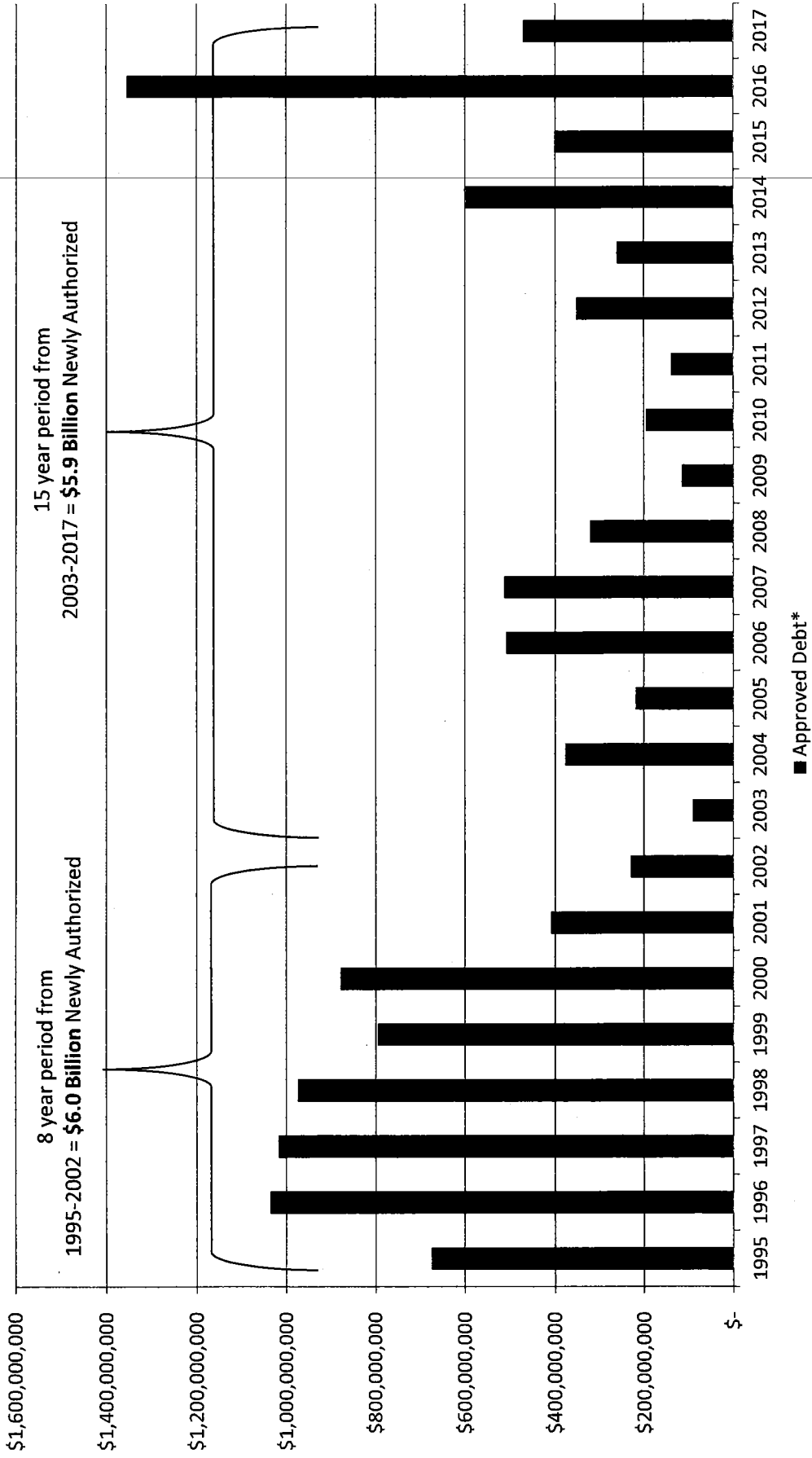
at the district's annual meeting. Yet the bill, as drafted, does not remove or change the authority of the school boards in these school districts to adopt such an initial resolution. It isn't clear why we would view this proposed change as a wise amendment to state law. Under current law, elected officials decide whether to pass an initial resolution and are held accountable to the electorate for deciding to do so. But the proposed change leaves a situation where a bond resolution can start a referendum process any time an annual meeting chooses to, in circumstances where the overwhelming majority of annual meetings are not well attended and likely are not as representative of the electorate as the elected board of education.

- The bill, as drafted, would limit a unified school district board to adopt an initial resolution to raise money through a bond issue at a school board meeting during a very narrow window – between the third Monday in July and the third Monday in August.
- As drafted, AB 282 would prohibit the electors of a common school district or union high school district from voting on a resolution to exceed the revenue limit at a **special district meeting**. We wonder if the authors intended instead to prohibit such a school board from voting on such a resolution at a **special board meeting**. But, this assumption also appears a bit confusing. Why? School board “regular” and “special” meetings are noticed to the public in essentially the same manner. Once the news media finds out that the school board is holding a special meeting to consider an initial resolution to exceed the revenue limit, it seems reasonable to assume that that meeting would draw greater public attention than a regular meeting.
- The legislation tries to account for situations where a natural disaster causes a school district's costs to increase by stating that such a district can have a special meeting authorize a resolution within 6 months of the natural disaster. However, the school board would not be able to do it. A natural disaster would ordinarily seem to be the very circumstance where empowering governing bodies that can take more immediate action would seem the best course of action. Instead, under the legislation only a special meeting would be able to respond to a natural disaster if raising money through bonding is required.

The confusion regarding the bill drafting aside, we simply believe the intent of the bill is an unwarranted intrusion into the affairs of the local school district and a micromanagement of the authority of the local school board.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. If you should have any questions on our position on AB 282, please call me at 608-242-1370.

Wisconsin School District Referendum Approved Debt Since 1995 Annual Bond Authorizations

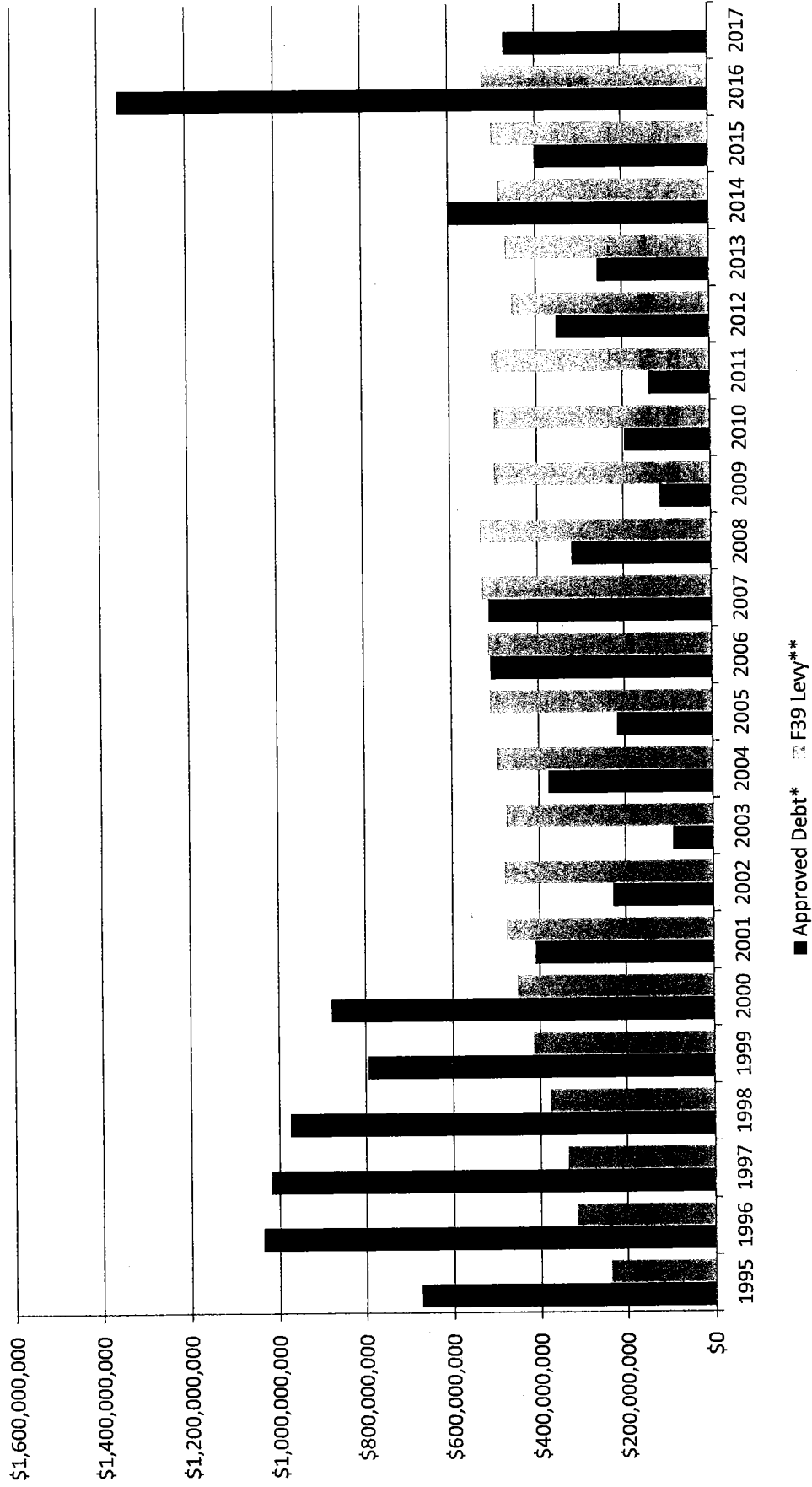


* Approved amounts have been adjusted for inflation using Consumer Price Index Data (CPI) and have been modified to reflect the fiscal year
Source: Department of Public Instruction

Wisconsin School District

Referendum Approved Debt Since 1995

Annual Bond Authorizations and Debt Levies

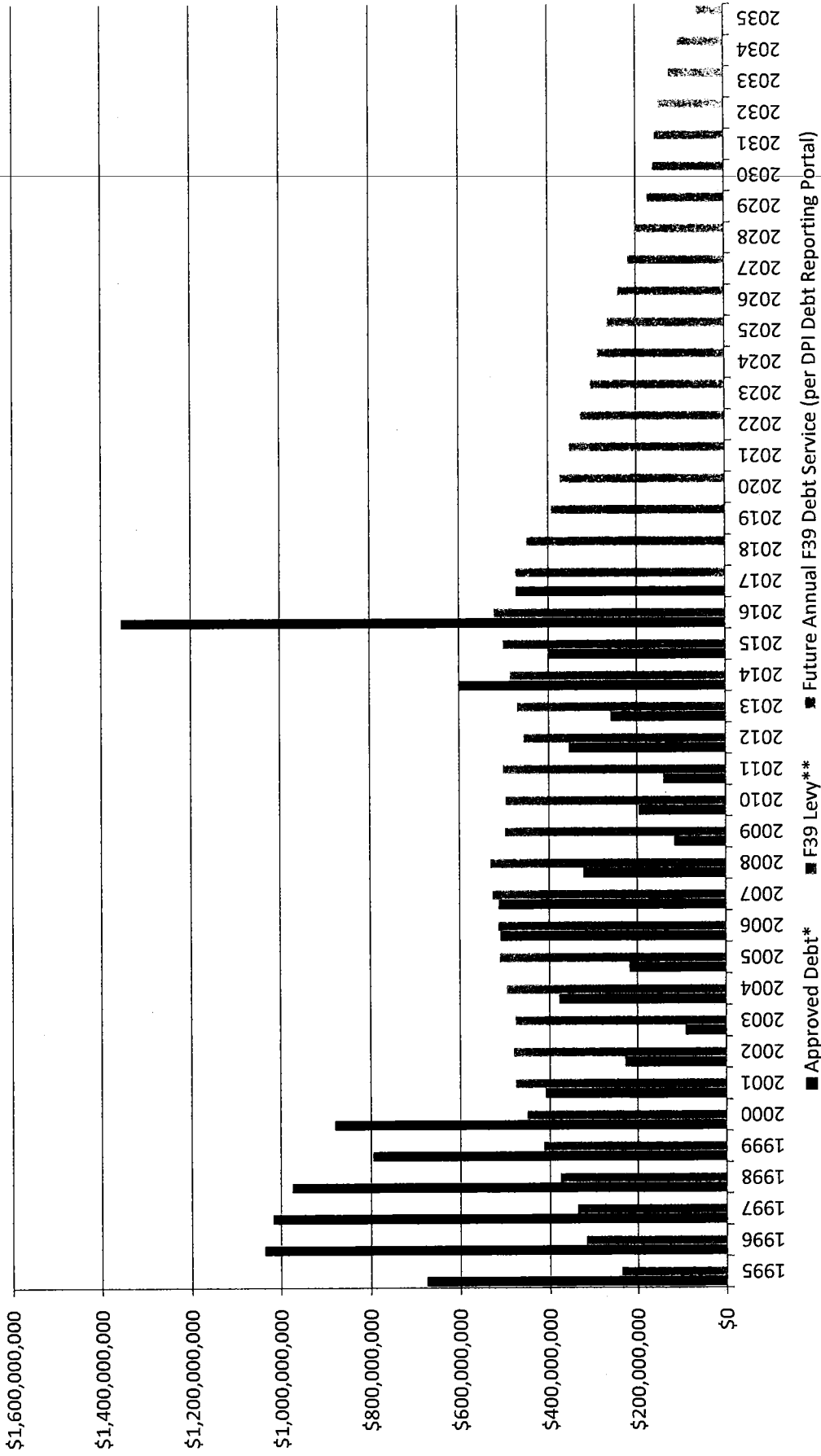


* Approved amounts have been adjusted for inflation using Consumer Price Index Data (CPI) and have been modified to reflect the fiscal year

** Levy reflects fall of each year, payments due following year

Source: Department of Public Instruction

Wisconsin School District Referendum Approved Debt Since 1995 Annual Bond Authorizations, Debt Levies and Future Debt Service



* Approved amounts have been adjusted for inflation using Consumer Price Index Data (CPI) and have been modified to reflect the fiscal year

** Levy reflects fall of each year, payments due following year

Source: Department of Public Instruction

**Wisconsin School District Referendum History
Breakdown by Election Date
2000 through 2017**

Year	Date	Issue Debt			Nonrecurring			Recurring		
		Failed	Passed	Pass Percentage	Failed	Passed	Pass Percentage	Failed	Passed	Pass Percentage
2000	(Presidential Election)	45	67	59.8%	16	17	51.5%	23	26	53.1%
	February 2000	2	5	71.4%	0	0	0.0%	0	1	100.0%
	April 2000	11	16	59.3%	7	6	46.2%	8	10	55.6%
	September 2000	8	5	38.5%	1	4	80.0%	4	3	42.9%
	November 2000	6	27	81.8%	4	7	63.6%	4	5	55.6%
	Special Elections	18	14	43.8%	4	0	0.0%	7	7	50.0%
2001		49	35	41.7%	13	16	55.2%	33	20	37.7%
	February 2001	14	6	30.0%	1	3	75.0%	4	2	33.3%
	April 2001	16	12	42.9%	8	8	50.0%	10	9	47.4%
	Special Elections	19	17	47.2%	4	5	55.6%	19	9	32.1%
2002		35	24	40.7%	13	11	45.8%	18	2	10.0%
	February 2002	1	4	80.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
	April 2002	17	11	39.3%	7	4	36.4%	12	1	7.7%
	September 2002	2	1	33.3%	2	2	50.0%	1	0	0.0%
	November 2002	9	7	43.8%	3	3	50.0%	3	0	0.0%
	Special Elections	6	1	14.3%	1	2	66.7%	2	1	33.3%
2003		44	13	22.8%	13	8	38.1%	24	5	17.2%
	February 2003	11	3	21.4%	1	1	50.0%	8	0	0.0%
	April 2003	17	5	22.7%	8	3	27.3%	11	0	0.0%
	Special Elections	16	5	23.8%	4	4	50.0%	5	5	50.0%
2004	(Presidential Election)	17	32	65.3%	9	16	64.0%	13	10	43.5%
	February 2004	2	10	83.3%	1	1	50.0%	3	2	40.0%
	April 2004	5	8	61.5%	4	7	63.6%	2	5	71.4%
	September 2004	2	4	66.7%	1	1	50.0%	0	0	0.0%
	November 2004	8	10	55.6%	1	4	80.0%	3	1	25.0%
	Special Elections	0	0	0.0%	2	3	60.0%	5	2	28.6%
2005		25	17	40.5%	14	16	53.3%	13	10	43.5%
	February 2005	2	7	77.8%	3	1	25.0%	2	6	75.0%
	April 2005	14	3	17.6%	9	7	43.8%	6	2	25.0%
	Special Elections	9	7	43.8%	2	8	80.0%	5	2	28.6%
2006		22	40	64.5%	22	32	59.3%	11	10	47.6%
	February 2006	2	5	71.4%	2	5	71.4%	1	1	50.0%
	April 2006	9	9	50.0%	13	12	48.0%	4	5	55.6%
	September 2006	3	4	57.1%	3	1	25.0%	1	1	50.0%
	November 2006	5	19	79.2%	3	8	72.7%	4	2	33.3%
	Special Elections	3	3	50.0%	1	6	85.7%	1	1	50.0%
2007		25	31	55.4%	18	22	55.0%	14	9	39.1%
	February 2007	1	8	88.9%	3	3	50.0%	1	2	66.7%
	April 2007	17	16	48.5%	10	14	58.3%	10	5	33.3%
	Special Elections	7	7	50.0%	5	5	50.0%	3	2	40.0%
2008	(Presidential Election)	27	30	52.6%	23	32	58.2%	19	10	34.5%
	February 2008	1	3	75.0%	4	2	33.3%	3	1	25.0%
	April 2008	13	15	53.6%	9	14	60.9%	9	1	10.0%
	September 2008	1	3	75.0%	1	5	83.3%	2	0	0.0%
	November 2008	10	8	44.4%	7	7	50.0%	3	8	72.7%
	Special Elections	2	1	33.3%	2	4	66.7%	2	0	0.0%

Wisconsin School District Referendum History Breakdown by Election Date 2000 through 2017

Year	Date	Issue Debt			Nonrecurring			Recurring		
		Failed	Passed	Pass Percentage	Failed	Passed	Pass Percentage	Failed	Passed	Pass Percentage
2009		14	13	48.1%	17	19	52.8%	10	3	23.1%
	February 2009	2	0	0.0%	5	0	0.0%	2	0	0.0%
	April 2009	5	7	58.3%	10	14	58.3%	7	2	22.2%
	Special Elections	7	6	46.2%	2	5	71.4%	1	1	50.0%
2010		16	26	61.9%	18	19	51.4%	8	2	20.0%
	February 2010	0	4	100.0%	1	4	80.0%	1	0	0.0%
	April 2010	8	14	63.6%	10	10	50.0%	6	0	0.0%
	September 2010	2	1	33.3%	3	1	25.0%	0	1	100.0%
	November 2010	6	7	53.8%	3	3	50.0%	1	1	50.0%
	Special Elections	0	0	0.0%	1	1	50.0%	0	0	0.0%
2011		20	13	39.4%	10	22	68.8%	1	4	80.0%
	February 2011	0	0	0.0%	3	4	57.1%	0	1	100.0%
	April 2011	11	6	35.3%	6	12	66.7%	1	1	50.0%
	Special Elections	9	7	43.8%	1	6	85.7%	0	2	100.0%
2012 (Presidential Election)		11	29	72.5%	10	19	65.5%	3	4	57.1%
	February 2012	1	0	0.0%	0	1	100.0%	2	0	0.0%
	April 2012	3	10	76.9%	5	10	66.7%	0	1	100.0%
	August 2012	0	0	0.0%	2	1	33.3%	0	0	0.0%
	November 2012	7	17	70.8%	3	7	70.0%	1	3	75.0%
	Special Elections	0	2	100.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
2013		16	19	54.3%	11	21	65.6%	3	1	25.0%
	February 2013	1	1	50.0%	0	5	100.0%	0	1	100.0%
	April 2013	13	12	48.0%	8	15	65.2%	3	0	0.0%
	Special Elections	2	6	75.0%	3	1	25.0%	0	0	0.0%
2014		18	33	64.7%	15	39	72.2%	7	8	53.3%
	February 2014	1	3	75.0%	2	4	66.7%	0	3	100.0%
	April 2014	5	12	70.6%	8	15	65.2%	2	1	33.3%
	August 2014	1	2	66.7%	1	3	75.0%	0	0	0.0%
	November 2014	9	15	62.5%	4	16	80.0%	5	4	44.4%
	Special Elections	2	1	33.3%	0	1	100.0%	0	0	0.0%
2015		19	27	58.7%	9	31	77.5%	0	4	100.0%
	February 2015	0	1	100.0%	0	3	100.0%	0	0	0.0%
	April 2015	16	23	59.0%	9	25	73.5%	0	2	100.0%
	Special Elections	3	3	50.0%	0	3	100.0%	0	2	100.0%
2016 (Presidential Election)		18	64	78.0%	9	38	80.9%	5	20	80.0%
	February 2016	0	4	100.0%	2	6	75.0%	1	0	0.0%
	April 2016	10	26	72.2%	3	20	87.0%	3	9	75.0%
	August 2016	0	0	0.0%	1	1	50.0%	0	0	0.0%
	November 2016	8	34	81.0%	3	11	78.6%	1	10	90.9%
	Special Elections	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	1	100.0%
2017		15	17	53.1%	6	18	75.0%	6	8	57.1%
	February 2017	2	1	33.3%	0	0	0.0%	0	2	100.0%
	April 2017	13	16	55.2%	6	18	75.0%	6	6	50.0%
	Special Elections	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%

TOTAL (2000-2017)	421	513	240	378	205	148
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**Wisconsin School District Referendum History
Breakdown by Election Date
2000 through 2017**

Summary

Election Month	Issue Debt			Non-recurring			Recurring		
	Failed	Passed	Pass Percentage	Failed	Passed	Pass Percentage	Failed	Passed	Pass Percentage
February	43	65	60.2%	28	43	60.6%	28	22	44.0%
April	203	221	52.1%	140	214	60.5%	100	60	37.5%
August/September	19	20	51.3%	15	19	55.9%	8	5	38.5%
November	68	144	67.9%	31	66	68.0%	25	34	57.6%
Special	103	80	43.7%	32	54	62.8%	50	35	41.2%
Total	436	530	54.9%	246	396	61.7%	211	156	42.5%

Election Year	Issue Debt			Non-recurring			Recurring		
	Failed	Passed	Pass Percentage	Failed	Passed	Pass Percentage	Failed	Passed	Pass Percentage
Presidential Election									
2000	45	67	59.8%	16	17	51.5%	23	26	53.1%
2004	17	32	65.3%	9	16	64.0%	13	10	43.5%
2008	27	30	52.6%	23	32	58.2%	19	10	34.5%
2012	11	29	72.5%	10	19	65.5%	3	4	57.1%
2016	18	64	78.0%	9	38	80.9%	5	20	80.0%
Total	118	222	65.3%	67	122	64.6%	63	70	52.6%
Non-Presidential Election									
2001	49	35	41.7%	13	16	55.2%	33	20	37.7%
2002	35	24	40.7%	13	11	45.8%	18	2	10.0%
2003	44	13	22.8%	13	8	38.1%	24	5	17.2%
2005	25	17	40.5%	14	16	53.3%	13	10	43.5%
2006	22	40	64.5%	22	32	59.3%	11	10	47.6%
2007	25	31	55.4%	18	22	55.0%	14	9	39.1%
2009	14	13	48.1%	17	19	52.8%	10	3	23.1%
2010	16	26	61.9%	18	19	51.4%	8	2	20.0%
2011	20	13	39.4%	10	22	68.8%	1	4	80.0%
2013	16	19	54.3%	11	21	65.6%	3	1	25.0%
2014	18	33	64.7%	15	39	72.2%	7	8	53.3%
2015	19	27	58.7%	9	31	77.5%	0	4	100.0%
2017	15	17	53.1%	6	18	75.0%	6	8	57.1%
Total	318	308	49.2%	179	274	60.5%	148	86	36.8%

Please note that the Election Month Summary includes all 2017 Results.

Operational Referendum Trend

BAIRD

Non –Recurring Operational Referendum History

- Since 1995,
 - 418/689 (61%) **NR Referendum Questions** have passed totaling \$1,705,601,847
 - 178/233 (76%) **Districts** have successfully passed NR Ref Questions.
 - The 102 Districts that went for more than one NR Question over this time were only counted once
- In 2016-17,
 - 106 Districts have active authorizations
 - **Totaling \$120 million**

Recurring Operational Referendum History

- Since 1995,
 - 189/489 (39%) **RR Referendum Questions** have passed totaling \$183,257,624
 - 131/236 (56%) **Districts** have successfully passed RR Ref Questions.
 - The 35 Districts that went for more than one RR Question over this time were only counted once
 - 55 of the 131 Districts also received approval for a Non-Recurring Question

Appleton Area School District Testimony before the Education Committee of the Assembly with regard to Bills #282, #268, #269, and #77

Appleton comments on Assembly Bill #282

- The tone of this legislation suggests that school districts have been secretive in going out to referendum. This tone is unwarranted, and not reflective of the local election of school board members and their expectations that school administration seek public involvement throughout all phases of the referendum process. Should a Board of Education try to slip something past a community, it would be doomed from the start. Only through open discussion and planning that involves significant input and feedback from a community, can a Board hope to be successful in the referendum process. A successful referendum necessarily involves countless public meetings discussing the merits of the referendum questions and consequently cannot occur outside of the public eye. Finally, School Boards must retain flexibility of timing for consideration of referendums. The Appleton Area School District Board of Education and administration strongly oppose Assembly Bill #282.
- Thank you for your time and attention this morning.