



JANEL BRANDTJEN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 22ND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Rep. Brandtjen Testimony AB 203/SB 193

Thank you Chairpersons Bernier and Tusler, and Honorable Committee members for holding this hearing regarding AB 203.

Over the past several years, numerous legislators, including myself, have worked with county and municipal clerks, as well as the Elections Commission staff, in an effort to increase voter integrity and implement cost-saving measures for local governments across the state.

The final product is an optional “direct balloting” voting process that allows voters to cast their in-person absentee ballot directly into the voting machine. This process will alert voters to potential mistakes and allow them to fix the errors before casting their ballot, as they are able to do on Election Day. In addition, this procedure will increase accessibility for the disabled community by requiring an ADA ballot-marking unit be available during in-person absentee voting. This will allow a secret ballot to be cast by all voters.

The amount of people engaging in in-person absentee voting has doubled, even tripled in some cases, in the past few years. Many local municipalities hire dozens of additional election inspectors to process absentee ballots into the voting machine to meet their deadline. Many ballots are rejected by electronic voting machines because they are made out incorrectly or damaged when opening the absentee envelope. Election inspectors then recreate ballots by considering the voters’

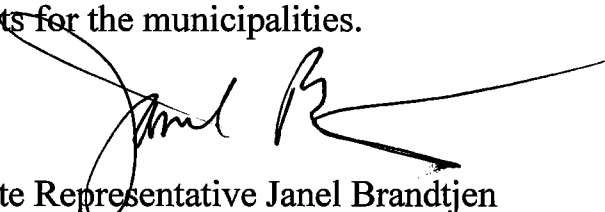
intent. In the most recent recount, it was found that a high number of mistakes were made when election inspectors recreated the ballot incorrectly.

The result of this is an increasing cost to hire more election inspectors and renting additional election machines. In addition, election inspectors usually work longer schedules on Election Day to deal with the ever-increasing absentee ballots. For municipalities who wish to implement this process, there is the potential for a large cost savings and the ability to report more timely results.

Second, under this process there is increased security and transparency built in. In the current system, if one votes in-person absentee, the ballot is sealed in an envelope and stored away until Election Day. This bill allows municipalities to adopt a policy that allows the ballot to be put directly into the voting machine by the voter, thus increasing voter integrity. Voters feel comfortable feeding their own ballot into the machine and will be more confident that their vote will be counted. Additional measures to ensure ballot bags are tagged and initialed, as well providing number of votes online, is provided in the bill. With these measures, both security and transparency will be increased.

This bill has several measures in place that ensure all ballots are treated equally, ensuring every Wisconsinite has an equal vote. The total number of absentee ballots are counted each day but the vote count is not tabulated and reported until the polls close on Election Day.

To summarize, this bill will increase voter confidence, security, transparency, and accessibility in the in-person absentee process with the caveat of a reduction in costs for the municipalities.



State Representative Janel Brandtjen



DAVID CRAIG

STATE SENATOR

Assembly and Senate Committees on Campaigns and Elections
Public Hearing, May 29, 2019
Senate Bill 193
Senator David Craig, 28th Senate District

Chair Bernier, Chair Tusler, and Committee Members,

Thank you for taking testimony on Senate Bill 193 regarding the use of an electronic voting machine to cast a vote with an in-person absentee ballot.

Several of the municipal, town, and village clerks I represent in the 28th Senate District requested the legislation before you. They see the increasing demand by citizens wanting to vote in-person absentee. In addition, voters feel reassured that their vote is counted when they physically feed their ballot into the voting machine.

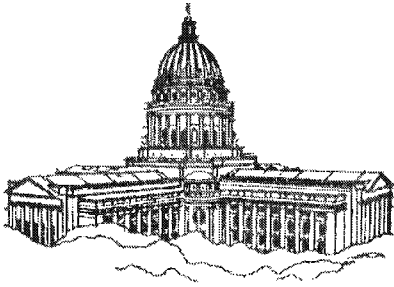
Currently, in-person absentee votes are sealed in an envelope and only opened and counted after voting has occurred on Election Day. The current process can be cumbersome if there are several thousand absentee ballots and even worse if those ballots have errors that need to be corrected by poll workers to confirm the voter's intent. Much of this work is being done late into the night and early morning with some poll workers working longer than ten hour shifts, thus increasing the risk of errors and/or miscounted ballots.

Further, it must be emphasized that under this legislation, the process of allowing "direct balloting" by absentee voters would be OPTIONAL to local municipalities. If the local clerk/municipality does not believe that allowing this process would increase efficiency as well as voting integrity, then the municipality is under no obligation to adopt and implement. Note that voting processes already vary from county to county and from municipality to municipality

in Wisconsin. This diversity of our elections processes is actually a strength in our State's efforts for election security and helps protect against whole-sale attempts at voter fraud.

SB 193 also has a significant cost savings mechanism for many of the large municipalities in the state. In recent history, additional poll workers have to be hired the day of the election to count more and more absentee votes. SB 193 allows absentee votes to be counted prior to Election Day, rather than at the last minute on Election Day.

Thank you for allowing my testimony on this election reform.



LENA C. TAYLOR

Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

HERE TO SERVE YOU!

**Joint Hearing of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections and the
Senate Committee on Elections, Ethics and Rural Issues
Public Hearing AB 203/SB 193
May 29, 2019**

Good Morning Chairman Bernier and Tusler, Vice-Chairman Tiffany and Sanfelippo, and Committee Members of both the Senate Committee on Elections, Ethics, and Rural Issues and the Assembly Committee on Campaign and Elections. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on AB 203, regarding using an electronic voting machine to cast a vote with an in-person absentee ballot and providing a penalty.

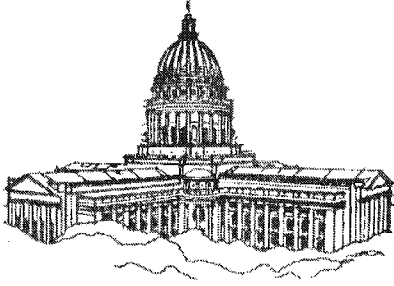
After the 2000 presidential election and Florida's ballots that had punch tabs that weren't completely punched, aka "hanging chads", Congress passed the "Help America Vote Act". The Act called for the modernization of voting processes and allocated funding to states to buy new voting technology. Many states took advantage of the law to implement changes in voter registration, in-person absentee voting, the way voters cast their ballots, and streamline the efficiency by which ballots were counted.

Well nearly 19 years later, for the first time in some Milwaukee locations, many in-person absentee voters, used an electronic voting machine, this past election cycle. Voters were reluctant at first and talk in the community spread quickly about the electronic machines. People appreciated seeing a printed receipt of the selections they had made after voting. Before long, residents were saying, "it's about time" and "what took so long" to use electronic voting machines.

In spite of the concerns raised in the 2016 presidential election about hacking and election day interference, the easier we make it for people to vote, the more people are likely to participate. In addition, more residents are taking advantage of in-person absentee voting. In November 2016, more than 800,000 state residents voted early. The numbers for future elections are only set to increase. AB 203 is one response to help the state respond to the expected need.

AB 203 and SB 193 provides a method to respond to increased voter participation, high turnout, and quicker resolution to the counting of absentee ballots. I say this, understanding that I have not always been proud of decisions and policies made that in fact had the opposite effect. Some of those efforts included closed DMV stations or reducing their hours, making it difficult to obtain a free state photo ID that can be used for voting, imposing limits on early voting, student IDs and residency, replacing the non-partisan Government Accountability Board with the Elections Commission, cutting the commission's staff, purging voter databases to undo a voter's registration without their knowledge, and of course gerrymandered districts.

Of course, I know that there are members of the committee that will not agree with the way I interpret the intent of those laws and policy decisions. We will likely continue to debate our views. However, today legislators from both side of the aisle, have been able to reach a consensus that AB 203 helps the residents of our state.



LENA C. TAYLOR

Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

HERE TO SERVE YOU!

Technology has a role, like this year's pilot tests of Wisconsin's new Badger Book electronic poll book system, which was used to check in and register more than 5,000 people to vote at polling places in 5 cities. Therefore, I encourage your support of this bill that will help modernize and protect Wisconsin's in-absentee voting process. Thank you.

**Testimony of Meagan Wolfe
Administrator
Wisconsin Elections Commission**

**Senate Committee on Elections, Ethics and Rural Issues
Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections
May 29, 2019**

**Room 411 South, State Capitol
Public Hearing**

Chairperson Bernier, Chairperson Tusler and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 193 and Assembly Bill 203. The bipartisan Elections Commission has discussed versions of this bill on several occasions but has not taken a position on it. The Commission decided that because of the policy choices involved which are in the purview of the Legislature, and that are viewed differently by various municipal and county clerks, it would not take a position in support of or in opposition to the bill. Today's testimony is being presented for information only.

Our staff has worked extensively with the authors and clerks supporting the bill to identify and address potential administrative issues. We appreciate that the authors and clerks working on the bill have taken our input and addressed many of our questions during the drafting process.

There is broad agreement that it is a challenge for some municipalities to process all absentee ballots on Election Day for high turnout elections. Currently, absentee ballots must be received by the municipal clerk, separated from a certificate envelope, and checked in and processed at the polling place or a Central Count absentee ballot processing location. It is a labor-intensive and time-consuming process, and the resources needed by local election officials has significantly increased over the last decade as absentee voting has become more popular among voters.

This bill would allow a municipal governing body to implement an alternative process of in-person absentee voting where the voter casts a ballot directly into the voting equipment at the clerk's office rather than having it processed at the polling place or Central Count location. The number of ballots cast are reconciled with the number of voters and reported daily, but votes are not tabulated until Election Day and results still are not reported until the close of polls.

The voting equipment would alert the voter if there is an error on the ballot so it can be returned to the voter and corrected. This differs from the current envelope process where the absentee voter would not know if there was a problem with the ballot being processed at the polls. Once the ballot is cast at the clerk's office there is no opportunity for the voter to change their mind and request a new ballot. That is currently an option although

it is not widely used during most elections. Voters who may wish to retain this option would still be able to vote an absentee ballot at the clerk's office using the current certificate envelope method.

Under the bill, the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) would be responsible for establishing a procedure for certifying municipalities who wish to use the alternative process. The Wisconsin Elections Commission would be responsible for reviewing interested municipality's plans to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements including: that the municipality's in-person absentee locations have internet connectivity to the statewide voter registration system, review of municipal ordinance or authority, and review of the municipality's plan for securing voting equipment and ballots in a double-lock location at the end of each day. Most notably, the bill requires municipalities using the alternative process to have voting equipment which can capture images of the front and back of the ballot and which can create the necessary write-in reports. The Wisconsin Elections Commission would be required to develop a voting equipment protocol that includes testing these features in order to certify that municipalities have the equipment needed to use the alternative process.

The bill allows the WEC 60 days to review and approve municipality's use of the alternative process. It may be useful to extend the timeline for approval from 60 days to 90 to ensure that municipalities, counties, and the state have adequate time between and prior to elections to prepare for the implementation of the new process.

Throughout the drafting process the WEC has been given opportunities to review drafts and provide feedback. As with any new legislation, Elections Commission staff has identified policy and procedural changes, including the following:

1. One overarching policy consideration WEC staff has previously identified is the trade-off between the efficiencies the process may offer for municipalities which choose to implement it and the differences in voting procedures it will create between neighboring municipalities. It is impossible to know for certain how much voters will question their voting process being different from that in a neighboring municipality. If significant concerns or confusion results, both the WEC and local election officials will need to communicate effectively regarding the new optional process.
2. The bill shifts the processing of in-person absentee ballots from election inspectors to municipal clerks and their staffs. Because the major political parties have a statutory right to nominate individuals to serve as election inspectors, this may be seen as both an administrative and a policy change related to the respective roles of local election officials and the involvement of political party representatives. We have not heard concerns from the major political parties regarding this change but want to make you aware of the difference.
3. For county clerks who program voting equipment for municipalities, Section 5.84(1)(b) may require the county clerk to schedule the programming at an earlier date as determined by municipalities which choose to conduct the alternate process. A municipality using the alternative process must notify the county clerk at least 70 days before Election Day and must submit a plan to the Elections

Commission at least 60 days prior to the first day of using the process. It is possible the municipality may not know whether the Commission has approved their process prior to the deadline for notifying the county.

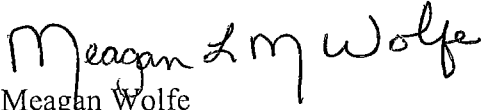
4. The bill limits the opportunity to use the alternative process to municipalities with newer voting equipment that captures digital images of ballots. It also introduces new methods of counting write-in votes. Currently write-in votes must be examined individually by election inspectors to determine the elector's intent. The bill would allow the use of a write-in report or write-in section of the results tape. The write-in report functionality of newer voting equipment has not previously been tested by the WEC as part of its voting equipment certification process because it is not required under current statutes. The WEC would need to implement a testing protocol for that function and test it on voting equipment systems which have already been approved and are in use in Wisconsin and apply those standards to any subsequent systems undergoing testing. While voting equipment vendors have stated that they believe their write-in report functionality does tabulate write-in votes in a way that could accommodate the alternative process, the WEC has not verified that is the case.
5. The bill would modify the location for challenging voters. Challenges are rare but those related to in-person absentee voters would be conducted at the clerk's office, meaning that potential challengers would need to attend voting hours for up to two weeks rather than only on Election Day. The challenge structure proposed in the bill would also allow voters to be present during a potential challenge and to potentially remedy the challenge, whereas when using the Election Day, envelope process the absentee voter is not present. Challenges to absentee ballots submitted by mail or through Special Voting Deputies would still be initiated at the polling place.
6. The bill also requires all in-person absentee voters to state their name and address when requesting a ballot in the clerk's office, which is not currently required but would ensure transparency for any observers who are present.
7. The bill changes the current rule that an absentee ballot is not counted if it is discovered that the voter died before Election Day, which is possible because the ballot is not processed until that day. The bill would remove the requirement that a ballot of an absentee voter who has since died be located and rejected for all absentee voters, not only those using the alternative process. Clerks report that the current rule is enforced unevenly because municipal clerks do not always know of a recent death in time to pull the ballot.
8. While the bill does not specifically require changes to the statewide voter registration system, WEC staff believes some changes may be required which can be absorbed in the agency's budget and will allow for enhanced tracking and reporting for municipalities who are using the alternative process.

The Elections Commission has not taken a position on the policy changes outlined above, or whether the alternative voting process established in the bill is the best method of alleviating the challenge of processing all absentee ballots on Election Day. However,

we thought it would be worthwhile to point out these changes from current election procedures.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If I can provide any additional information or clarification, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meagan L M Wolfe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and "W".

Meagan Wolfe

Administrator

Wisconsin Elections Commission

608-266-8005 / meagan.wolfe@wi.gov

Information only
Wisconsin County Clerks
Association

AB-203/SB-193 relating to: using an electronic voting machine to cast a vote with an in-person absentee ballot and providing a penalty.

Wisconsin County Clerk Association

In **OPPOSITION** WITHOUT AMENDMENTS and Monday Processing Option

In **SUPPORT** ONLY with AMENDMENTS and Monday Processing Option

Even though a majority of the Wisconsin County Clerks surveyed show a varying degree of support for this legislation, two-thirds (2/3) of those will only support this legislation if an option for processing absentee envelopes on the Monday prior to Election Day is also added.

AMENDMENTS NEEDED

1. Page 4 line 22: after "states aloud his or her name and address" insert "unless otherwise exempt from the requirement".
 - o This takes into consideration pending legislation (AB-168 *relating to: the requirement for stating name and address prior to voting*).
2. Page 11 line 2: after "at least 2" replace the word "individuals" with "Election Officials".
 - o (When absentee ballots are processed on Election Day, they can still be challenged. In the process, described in the Efficiency Option, once a ballot is inserted in the tabulator it can no longer be challenged.) An individual is too broad of a description. This could be used to describe someone's child who happened to be with the voter when they came into absentee vote. Election Officials have election training and take an oath of office. They have a better understanding of the election process and create the checks and balances needed in the process.
3. Page 11 line 10: after "At least 2" replace the word "persons" with "Election Officials".
 - o The same reasoning as in Amendment 2 apply.
4. Page 12 line 2: after "her name and address" add the words "unless otherwise exempt from the requirement and present proof of identification".
 - o This takes in consideration pending legislation (AB-168: *relating to: the requirement for stating name and address prior to voting*).
 - o The section "and present proof of identification" should be added to be consistent with requirements for in-person absentee voters not able to use the "Efficiency Option".
5. Page 12 line 24: change "60" to "90".
 - o In the legislation, the commission has 20 days to review the application. County clerks must have ballots to their municipalities at least 48 days prior to federal elections. If the commission requires modification prior to approval, we may already have ballots sent to voters. The extra time to needed for ballots to be programmed correctly.

6. Page 14 line 2: change "County" to "County Clerk or County Chief Election Officer".
 - o This clarifies who should be notified. The County is too broad of a definition, and a person who has no idea why they are receiving a notification may discard it. Without notification reaching the correct person, programming of ballots may not be accurate.

ADDITIONAL AMENDMENT

In the current legislation, ballots are pulled from the tabulators each day, bagged and sealed. In larger municipalities with heavy absentee voting, this process does not bring about any questions. In fact they may very likely need to bag and secure ballots during the day because their ballot bin is full. In smaller municipalities, this is problematic to voter anonymity. They may have days where they only have one voter. You would end up with ballot bags with one ballot. Smaller municipalities may only need to empty their ballot bins at the end of the in-person absentee voting period.

An incomplete explanation as to how the tabulators can be locked down with serialized seals was given during the public hearing a couple of years ago. This led to the ballots being bagged daily in this updated version. The serialized seals contain individual non-repeating numbers and once a seal is broken, it cannot be used again. Some municipalities have large ballot bins that will hold thousands of ballots. Others have more advanced security that creates a log each time the ballot bin is opened.

80% (38/47) of the county clerks surveyed in a separate question were in favor of bagging ballots as needed instead of each day.

- o Suggested amendment:
Page 12 line 5: ..."ballots cast in the municipality under s 6.981 ~~each day~~ as needed in a numbered and ..."

Monday Absentee Ballot Processing

The Absentee Voting Efficiency Option (AVEO) in this legislation would help a **few** municipalities, but the majority of the state would still not have the relief they need. Due to equipment and population, a **large** number of municipalities cannot use the AVEO system. With the ever increasing demand for absentee voting, clerks are looking for options to process the ever increasing number of absentee ballots. A Monday processing option would give over **1000 municipalities** in the state an option they could use to relieve the pressure of processing absentee ballots.

Survey Results

Q1 What is your position on AB-203/SB-193 (AVEO)?

Answer	Votes
Opposed	18
Support	2
Support with Amendments	9
Support with Amendments and Monday processing option	18

Q2 What is your position on an amendment to the AVEO bill to allow municipalities to secure ballots in tabulators instead of bagging ballots daily to as needed, similar to Election Day?

Answer	Votes
Opposed	9
Support	38

COUNTY CLERK

Brown County

305 E. WALNUT STREET, ROOM 120
P.O. BOX 23600
GREEN BAY, WI 54305-3600

SANDRA L. JUNO
COUNTY CLERK

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To: Members of the Assembly Campaigns and Elections Committee
Member of the Senate Committee on Elections, Ethics, & Rural Issues

From: Sandy Juno

Date: May 29, 2019

RE: ***AB-203 and SB-193: using an electronic voting machine to cast a vote with an in-person absentee ballot and providing a penalty***

Prior to the 2000 Presidential election, a law passed allowing everyone wishing to vote early the option to do so. Previously, this option was only available to electors that met state statutes for absentee voting. Over the past 2 decades, the number of early voters has increased dramatically. For example, in Brown County, the 2000 Presidential election had 6,770 absentee ballots cast and the 2016 Presidential Election had 43,033 absentee ballots cast. That is a difference of 36,268 ballots all of which must be processed in the same period.

In 2005, the legislature passed a law to allow municipalities to use a central count location for processing all municipal absentee ballots instead of processing at each polling location. Again, this is an optional tool for municipal boards to implement; no municipality is statutorily forced to use a central count absentee ballot processing system. In 2006, one municipality used a central count system. Over time, it has grown to 31 municipalities. The use of this tool has helped; however, due to the high volume of early voters in populous municipalities, it is still not enough. We need another tool to manage absentee ballots.

AB-203/SB-193 provides for municipal boards the option to use a method of in-person absentee voting where the elector has a choice of placing a voted ballot in an absentee envelope or inserting it directly into the tabulator. Reducing the number of envelopes needed to be opened on Election Day allows for overall better elections management and efficiencies. Again, this is another optional tool; no municipality will be statutorily forced to use the Absentee Voting Efficiency Option (AVEO).

As we approach the 2020 Presidential elections, clerks in populous counties are working especially hard to create plans for accommodating a high volume of electors casting ballots. It is critical that our legislators pass AB-203/SB-193 early in order for municipalities to create ordinances using AVEO and to obtain approval from the Wisconsin Election Commission. Moreover, municipal clerks need time to notify county clerks; train poll workers and the electorate about early voting changes; and to make security modifications to their facilities where AVEO is being used.

In Brown County, we have 8 municipalities using a Central Count processing system and I anticipate these populous communities will want to use an AVEO option for early voting. Please support these bills that will benefit elections management, efficiencies, and our electorate.



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May 29, 2019

AB-203/SB-193 - FACT SHEET

Absentee voting trends

- In the 2000 Presidential election, **4,000** absentee ballots were issued Brown County.
- In the 2016 Presidential election, **43,000** absentee ballots were issued in Brown County.
- This equates to a 1000% increase in absentee ballots cast since the year 2000.
 - Largely attributed to adopting *no excuse voting* in early 2000's.
- **4,000** more ballots were issued in 2016 Presidential election than 2012.
- **8,000** more ballots were issued in 2018 Governor's election than 2014.

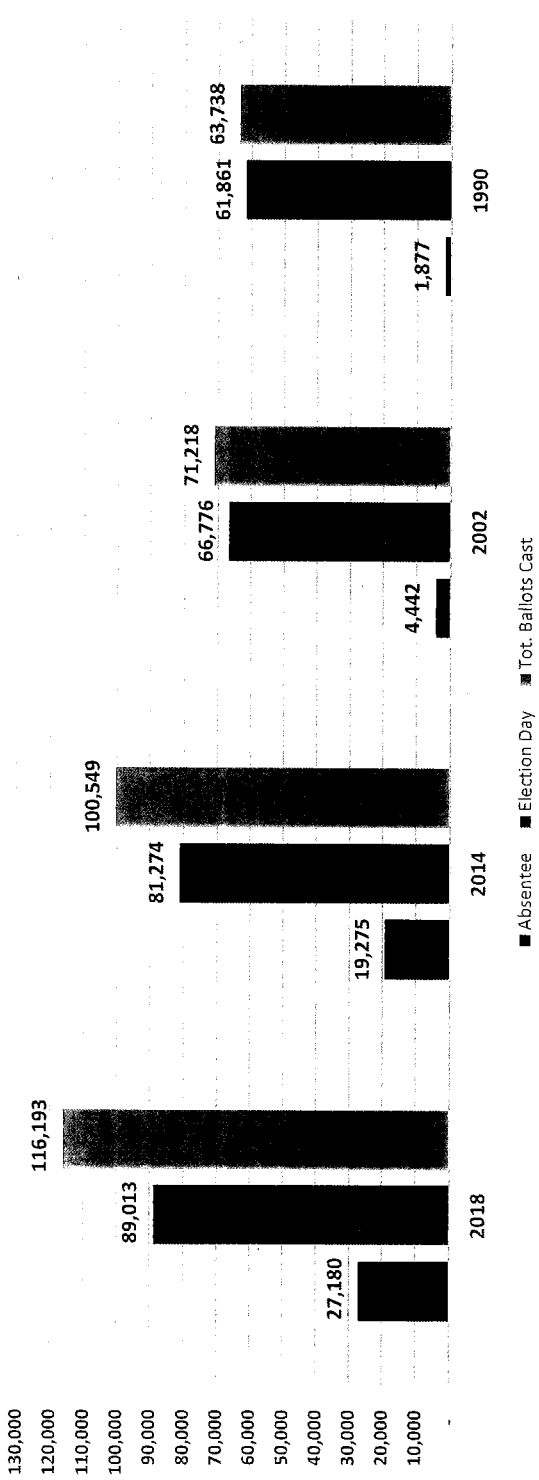
Impact on municipalities

- Highest number of absentee ballots cast is predominantly in populous cities and villages.
 - Leads to high demands on poll workers to process absentees on Election Day at polling location.
 - Central count municipalities still struggle to process absentees prior to the close of polls on Election Day due to immense volume.
 - Leads to delay in reporting results to the State and Media.
- In 2016, **75% of absentee ballots cast (35,000)** occurred directly in the municipal clerk's office.
 - Current processing involves using several envelopes that are handled and sorted numerous times prior to and on Election Day.
 - Puts stress on staff to maintain absentees as well as to remedy any errors that are encountered when finally processing ballots on Election Day.
 - Legislation would allow the voter to correct this information immediately in-office.
 - Decrease in the number of damaged ballots.
 - Correction of errors leads to more counted votes.
 - High-speed tabulators can be used to expedite the process, but costs are in excess of **\$35,000 to rent and over \$100,000 to own.**
 - Alternative method reduces the need to use high-speed tabulators as ballots are processed immediately.
 - Alternative method reduces municipal costs for supplies, elections equipment, and labor.

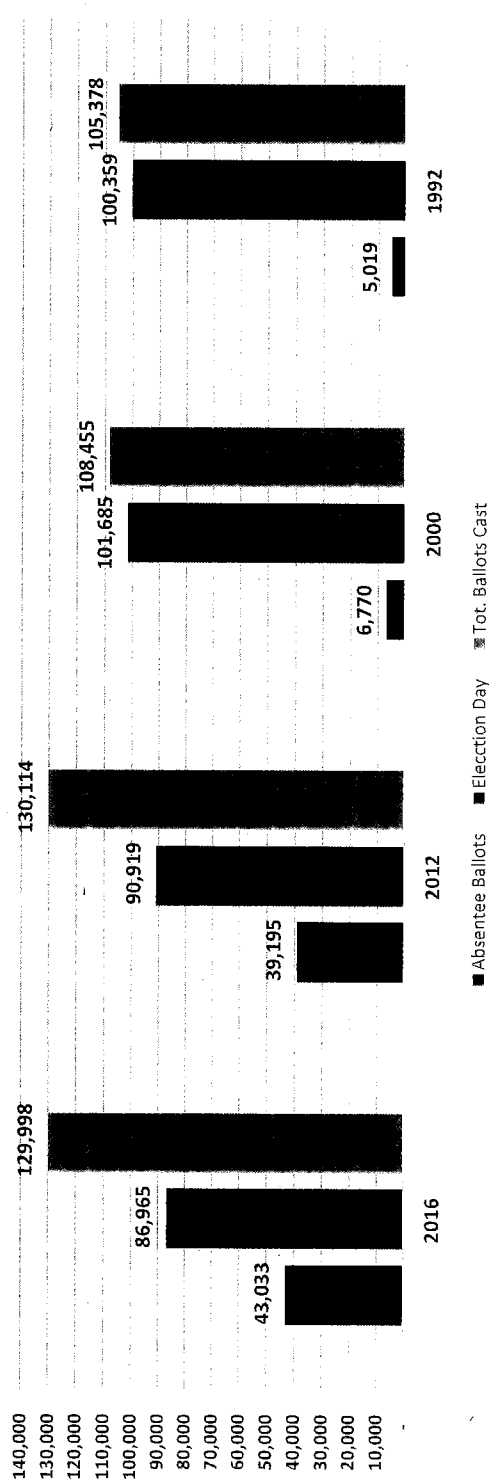
Moving Forward

- Absentee voting will continue to grow
 - Increased media attention
 - Direct mail
 - Political rallies and 'banked' voting
 - Jurisdictions need updated tools and processes to accommodate modern voting

Brown County Governor Elections Trend in Ballots Cast



Brown County Presidential Elections Trend in Ballots Cast



AB-203/SB-193

Testimony of Lisa Tollefson Rock County Clerk

Senate Committee on Elections, Ethics and Rural Issues
Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections
May 29, 2019
Room 411 South, State Capital
Public Hearing

Senate and Assembly Committee Members:

Thank you for your time and consideration. As the demand for absentee voting increases, so does the need for options to process the onslaught of absentee ballots. Next year we will be dealing with the Presidential Preference and the Presidential Election as a battleground state and the site of the Democratic Convention. I see our need for options to process absentee ballots only increasing.

This piece of legislation considers one option for processing absentee ballots. Our state is unique in the fact that elections are run at the local level. Some municipalities may need to use multiple options to process absentee ballots in a timely manner. Others are fine with the practices already in place. With our differences in population, equipment and demand, I do not believe there is a one size fits all solution.

Today I'm speaking against this legislation as it is written. There are a number of amendments that need to be added. There are still a number of items to consider.

AMENDMENTS NEEDED LINE DETAIL

1. Page 4 line 22: after "states aloud his or her name and address" insert "unless otherwise exempt from the requirement".
 - This takes into consideration pending legislation (AB-168 *relating to: the requirement for stating name and address prior to voting*).
2. Page 11 line 2: after "at least 2" replace the word "individuals" with "Election Officials".
 - (When absentee ballots are processed on Election Day, they can still be challenged. In the process, described in the Efficiency Option, once a ballot is inserted in the tabulator it can no longer be challenged.) An individual is too broad of a description. This could be used to describe someone's child who happened to be with the voter, when they came into absentee vote. Election Officials have election training and take an oath office. They have a better understanding of the election process and create the checks and balances needed in the process.
3. Page 11 line 10: after "At least 2" replace the word "persons:" with "Election Officials".
 - The same reasoning as in item 2 apply.

4. Page 12 line 2: after “her name and address” add the words “unless otherwise exempt from the requirement and present proof of identification”
 - This takes inconsideration pending legislation (AB-168: *relating to: the requirement for stating name and address prior to voting.*)
 - The section “and present proof of identification” should be added to be consistent with requirements for in-person absentee voters not able to use the “Efficiency Option”.

5. Page 12 line 24: change “60” to “90”.
 - In the legislation, the commission has 20 days to review the application. County clerks must have ballots to their municipalities at least 48 days prior to federal elections. If the commission requires modification prior to approval, we may already have ballots sent to voters. The extra time to needed for ballots to be programmed correctly.

6. Page 14 line 2: change “County” to “County Clerk or County Chief Election Officer”
 - This clarifies who should be notified. The County is too broad of a definition and a person who has no idea why they are receiving a notification may discard it. Without notification reaching the correct person, programming of ballots may not be correct.

Amendments Explanations

- Currently during the in-person absentee process the voter marks their ballot and places it in an envelope. Then on Election Day at the polling location or central count the election inspector states the absentee voter’s name and address out loud. At this point the voter’s ballot can still be challenged until it is entered in the tabulator.

In the AVEO process once the voter inserts their ballot into tabulator at the clerk’s office it is done. There is no other chance to challenge the ballot. The legislation states “the municipality shall have at least 2 individuals present”. Individuals is too broad of a description. This could be used to describe someone’s child who happened to be with the voter, when they came into absentee vote.

It is requested to change “2 individuals” and “2 persons” to “2 Election Officials” to be a part of the process. Election Officials have election training and take an oath of office. They have a better understanding of the election process and create the checks and balances needed in the process at the in-person absentee polling location.

- In the administration section (2) of the new subchapter for the Absentee Voting Efficiency Option it states, “An elector requesting to cast the ballot under s. 6.981 shall state aloud his or her name and address. The elector shall sign an absentee ballot certification request for purposes of this subchapter.” In training new election inspectors we are constantly drill “State-Show-Sign” Adding “**and present proof of identification**” into the instructions would clarify the administration section (4) of the subchapter

- In the legislation the municipality must apply 60 days prior to the first day on which the municipality would conduct voting under the AVEO process. Then the commission has 20 days to review and give notice of approval or changes to the municipality. Unfortunately, county clerks must have ballots to the municipal clerks 48 days prior to federal elections. If the commission request changes, this may effect ballots that have already been sent out. **Request to change “60 days” to “90 days”.**
- In the legislation the municipality notifies the county where the municipality is located at least 70 days before each election in which they will use the AVEO system. **Request to change “county” to “county clerk or chief county election officer”.** The County is too broad of a definition and a person who has no idea why they are receiving a notification may discard it. Without notification reaching the correct person, programming of ballots may not be accurate.
- Updates may be needed considering the change in pending legislation AB168 concerning voters with a disability not being able to state their name and address.

ADDITIONAL AMENDMENT

In the current legislation, ballots are pulled from the tabulators each day, bagged and sealed. In larger municipalities with heavy absentee voting, this process does not bring about any questions. In fact they may very likely need to bag and secure ballots during the day when their ballot bin is full. In smaller municipalities, this is problematic to voter anonymity. They may have days where they only have one voter. You would end up with ballot bags with one ballot. Smaller municipalities may only need to empty their ballot bins at the end of the in-person absentee voting period. When explaining the daily bagging to clerks in smaller municipalities, they would give me the look of ‘Why?’

An incomplete explanation as to how the tabulators can be locked down with serialized seals was given during the public hearing a couple of years ago. This lead to the ballots being bagged daily in this updated version. The serialized seals contain individual non-repeating numbers and once a seal is broken, it cannot be used again. Some municipalities have large ballot bins that will hold thousands of ballots. Others have more advanced security that creates a log each time the ballot bin is opened.

Recommend changing Page 12 Section (5)(a) to allow clerks to bag ballots as needed instead of each day. Of the county clerks surveyed 80% (38/47) were in favor of this amendment.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Equipment Type - This legislation was written with only one type of equipment in mind with a specific type of firmware. Varying types of equipment from three different vendors are used throughout the state. This option will help some communities with the increasing number of absentee ballots. Others will not see relief.

Write-in Report – The write-in report discussed in this legislation will work for some of the equipment used in this state. On the equipment I tested, the poll workers will be able to view the entire ballot if the voter writes a candidate in the write-in box. They can determine the voter's intent in these cases by looking at the screen on the tabulator in the polling location. If there are a large number of write-ins then it may be easy to look at the ballots, than to look at the ballot images one at a time on the screen. The City of Milton had 195 write-ins at the April Election. It would have been faster for them to look at the ballots than to have a group of election inspectors review the individuals ballots on the screen.

Unfortunately, if the voter writes a candidate with their office outside of write-in box. This will not be flagged by the equipment. The equipment also does not flag any of the items listed in state statutes 7.50(c):

- o **7.50 (c)** If an elector marks a ballot with a cross (**X**), or any other marks, as |, A, V, O, /, ✓, +, within the square to the right of a candidate's name, or any place within the space in which the name appears, indicating an intent to vote for that candidate, it is a vote for the candidate whose name it is opposite.

These votes would be missed. The write-in report can be helpful, but can also give the poll workers a false sense that they do not need to look at all the ballots.

Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) – This legislation does not require any updates to SVRS, which clerks must use as part of the Absentee Voting Efficiency Option. Currently in SVRS, the clerk must designate how the voter's absentee application was received: by mail, by email, in-person, etc. With this legislation clerks will have two different types of in-person voters. Those who will place their ballot directly in the tabulator and those who place their ballot in an envelope. Since clerks must reconcile the number voters who voted by placing the ballots in a tabulator each day, a separate designation would help with the reconciliation process. This designation could also be printed on the poll book and central count ballot listings to the help with voter participation after the election.

Without updates to SVRS, the efficiencies gained in this process, will become inefficiencies after the election when entering voter participation and election reconciliation.

Observers – Because of the extended timelines for in-person absentee voting, it will be nearly impossible to find observers to cover the entire time period.

Security – If this legislation is passed, my hope is that the Election Commission will be very diligent in their review of the security protocols the municipalities must follow. One clerk not keeping in mind the monumental importance of Election Security and not following a procedure will end up with a video on the internet undermining the integrity of our election in the entire state. I believe the election commission will need to implement audits of in-person voting locations and have the ability pull their approval if a municipality is not following security procedures.

Absentee Ballot Processing Options: Currently municipalities have two options for processing absentee ballots: At the polling place or at central count both on Election Day. The Efficiency Option in this legislation would help a few municipalities, but the majority of the state would still not have the relief they need.

I believe an **option to allow clerks to process absentee ballots on the Monday prior to Election Day** can be used to relieve the pressure of increased absentee voting. Over 1000 municipalities could use the

Monday processing option. Clerks with the approval of their boards could choose the option or options that would work the best for their situation.

With our differences in populations, equipment and demand, there is not a one size fits all solution. Our clerks need help to meet the demand of ever increasing absentee ballots.

Thank you for your time.

Please let me know, if you have any further questions.

Lisa Tollefson

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS, ETHICS AND RURAL ISSUES
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CAMPAIGN AND ELECTIONS

FROM: MEG WARTMAN WAUKESHA COUNTY CLERK

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF AB-203/SB-193

DATE: WEDNESDAY MAY 29, 2019

Thank you Chair Bernier and Chair Tusler for holding today's hearing. I would like to thank the many contributors who have worked on drafting this bill. I am asking you to support of AB-203/SB-193 which allows local governments the option to allow voters use an electronic voting machine to cast an in-person absentee ballot.

While I believe the bill will bring significant cost savings to local governments and will allow for timelier reporting of results on election night, to me the most important aspect of the bill will be to ensure that voter intent is honored.

As a former poll worker, chief inspector and a member of the Waukesha Board of Canvassers, I have seen first-hand some of the challenges in processing absentee ballots. When someone is voting in person the balloting machine will reject a ballot that has any errors and allow the voter an opportunity to correct their ballot. Currently, when processing absentee ballots the voter is not there to make any corrections, therefore we rely on poll workers to review any absentee ballots that the machine identifies as problematic. At times, when voter intent can be clearly identified, poll workers may be able to remake a ballot so that a mistake can be corrected and a vote can be cast. Other times, when voter intent on absentee ballot cannot be determined and the ballot is cast with 'no vote' being recorded.

Under the provisions of the bill today, those voting as in-person absentee would have the same opportunity as same day voters to correct any mistakes on their ballot and ensure that their vote is counted.

The number of absentee voters in Waukesha County continues to grow. We anticipate high interest in the 2020 elections, having this option in place would be very beneficial.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions.



Election Commission

Commissioners
Stephanie Findley, Chair
Carmen C. Cabrera
Robert F. Spindell, Jr.

Executive Director
Neil V. Albrecht

May 29, 2019

TO: Chairperson Bernier, Chairperson Tusler and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Elections, Ethics and Rural Issues
Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

FROM: Neil Albrecht, Executive Director, City of Milwaukee Election Commission

RE: Assembly Bill 203

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of AB 203. The City of Milwaukee enthusiastically supports this bill, with the understanding that adoption of this particular bill would not, in any way, restrict the schedule set by municipalities for In-Person Absentee Voting (IPAV).

The bill permits the alternative voting method only at the municipal clerk's office. In the City of Milwaukee the main voting location prior to Election Day is at a designated location other than the City Clerk's office. Also, due to a federal court decision, in-person absentee voting is now permitted at multiple alternative locations. The Legislature should allow the alternative voting method at designated sites that already conduct in-person absentee voting other than the City Clerk's office.

This proposed bill would allow Wisconsin Municipal Clerks the *option* of using voting tabulators during in-person absentee voting as an alternative to what currently can be a costly and time-consuming method of processing these absentee ballots. I believe this change to state law is important to the continued capacity of clerks to effectively manage all aspects of election administration, particularly during high turnout General Elections.

As an election administrator in this state for the past 15 years, including three Presidential Elections, I have experienced first-hand the overwhelming public interest in in-person absentee voting on both a local and national level. Nationally, the exponential growth of early voting (including in-person absentee) in Presidential Elections is estimated to have increased from 7% in 1992 to 36.6% in 2016. In the city of Milwaukee, substantial growth in numbers can be seen beginning with the 2000 Presidential Election:

2000: 5,000 IPAV voters

2004: 10,000

2008: 32,000

2012: 37,500

2016: 52,500

There are several noteworthy considerations related to this growth. First, no matter the size of the municipality, most municipalities have experienced comparable and *substantial* growth in IPAV voters. This issue is in no way unique to the City of Milwaukee, but is instead reflective of the state as a whole. Second, this increase can be attributed to a wide array of factors that include voter interest in avoiding Election Day wait times, as well as candidate, political party and media promotion of the availability of “early voting” opportunities. In fact, as an election administrator, I have very little control over this growth, but have instead witnessed a significant media push, driven by the political parties, to encourage people to vote early before the high turnout elections.

With the increase in numbers comes a substantial increase in processing cost. In 2016, the city staffed the central count of absentee ballots with 90 teams of two processors, and over a dozen supervisors and troubleshooters. Additionally, the city purchased high-speed tabulators from ES&S and leased three additional, at a total cost (labor and leased equipment, not including equipment purchased) of \$189,000. Even with this investment of staff and a near \$200,000 cost, the city did not finish processing absentee ballots until 1:30 a.m., which greatly slowed Milwaukee County’s release of comprehensive election results. In the 2018 midterm, the process of processing absentee ballots was not complete until midnight, which also delayed the availability of complete election results.

I have very little control over what has been a near 500% increase in in-person absentee voting activity. Where we, collectively, do have control is in process and cost. I am hopeful that clerks, in partnership with the Wisconsin Elections Commission and the Wisconsin Legislature, can agree on modifications to state law that proactively address this emerging administrative crisis, are cost-efficient, ensure the integrity of election results, and are appropriate to the geographic diversity of municipalities and counties in this state.

Allowing the use of an electronic voting machine to cast a vote with an in-person absentee ballot would have numerous benefits, which include:

1. As current in-person absentee voted ballots are not fed into a voting tabulator until Election Day, voters are not aware or notified of errors on their ballots and are not given the opportunity to remedy those errors. Instead, the ballot must be reconstructed by election workers, based on voter intent, during a very busy Election Day. This ballot reconstruction process is cumbersome, time-consuming and can result in lost votes or errors made during the process. In terms of ensuring the integrity of an election, creating the need to reconstruct a voter’s ballot should be avoided at any opportunity.
2. The cost of processing an in-person absentee ballot is significantly higher than that of a ballot fed directly into a tabulator by the voter. Costs include staff time tracking a high volume of absentee ballots, additional election worker pay to process absentee ballots, and absentee voting printed materials.

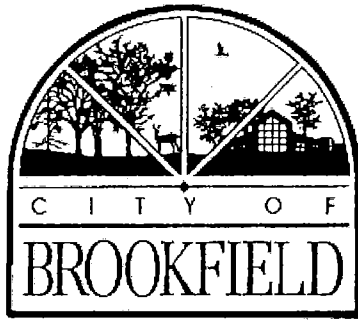
3. In-person absentee voters are often doubtful or mistrusting of the status of their ballot when it is placed in an envelope versus a tabulator. These voters would feel a much greater confidence in the integrity of the process if their ballots could be fed directly into a voting tabulator.
4. Election results can be made available on a much more timely schedule.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony,

Sincerely,



Neil Albrecht
Executive Director
City of Milwaukee Election Commission



CITY CLERK

Kelly Michaels, CMC, WCMC

2000 North Calhoun Road
Brookfield WI 53005-5095

Phone: (262) 796-6653

Fax: (262) 796-6671

michaels@ci.brookfield.wi.us

May 29, 2019

Members of the Senate Committee on Elections, Ethics and Rural Issues:

Members of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections:

RE: Senate Bill 193 and Assembly Bill 203

Dear Senators and Representatives:

I am writing in support of the direct balloting legislation reference above. In 2016, a coalition of Professional Municipal Clerks from Waukesha County met to talk about a solution for the inefficiencies, costs and challenges associated with managing the very popular in-person absentee voting! During those meetings, we realized there were members of our group who had been working as Professional Municipal Clerks for over 30 years. In all that time, the process had not been modernized even though laws had been changed to allow voters to vote absentee for any reason. Every year more and more political interest groups, candidates and parties promote absentee voting. The numbers of voters showing up in-person to vote absentee increases significantly especially during statewide and national partisan elections. The voters love it, as it is so convenient for them. In Brookfield, our small but mighty, four person office saw 10,000 absentee votes with 8,000 being cast in-person. The tax dollars we spent to manage just the envelope process for one election was over \$14,000. That is not to say we aren't extremely pleased with the high turn-out of our voters! We applaud those who come to vote and we enjoy the high participation in our Democracy! However, there are inefficiencies in our processes that are so correctable and that is why I am here today to testify.

When I see a line of voters to the door waiting to put their ballot inside an envelope, I look over at my very expensive and high tech voting equipment, all tested and sealed just sitting there doing absolutely nothing and I wonder, Why? Why can't the voter just put that ballot into the machine instead of using an envelope. They are standing right here in front of me. The machines would alert the voter to any balloting errors so they could correct it themselves. The machine is capable of holding that vote until Election Day. We are capable of securing those ballots and the machines.

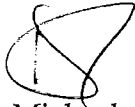
We still have a paper audit trail. I look over and see my very expensive equipment not being used, but then on Election Day, I have to lease additional equipment because poll workers have to feed all those ballots from the envelopes into the machine, but at the same time, I still need to provide equipment for poll site voting. Unfortunately, those folded ballots tend to jam the machines and so I can't really have 10,000 folded ballots interrupting Election Day voting so I lease additional equipment. However, I can't help but wonder, why? Those machines were just sitting there for two weeks. Wouldn't it make sense to use them when the voter is standing in my office in-person to vote absentee?

This legislation has been vetted thoroughly over the past several years. We have a great solution with security protections and integrity built into the process; a process that works; a process that saves tax dollars; a process that delivers election results faster; and a process that will substantially reduce the number of ballots remade at the polls.

On behalf of my community and as President of the Wisconsin Municipal Clerk's Association, I ask you to support SB-193/AB-203, the direct balloting solution. I am available to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

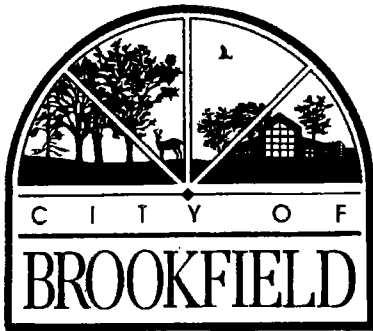
CITY OF BROOKFIELD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly Michaels', written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Kelly Michaels, CMC, WCMC

City of Brookfield Professional Municipal Clerk

President of Wisconsin Municipal Clerk's Association 2018-2019



MAYOR

Steven V. Ponto

2000 North Calhoun Road
Brookfield, Wisconsin 53005-5095
(262) 787-3525 - FAX (262) 796-6671
ponto@ci.brookfield.wi.us

May 28, 2019

Members of the Senate Committee on Elections, Ethics and Rural Issues;
Members of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

RE: Senate Bill 193 and Assembly Bill 203

Dear Senators and Representatives:

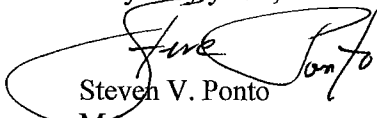
I am writing in support of the referenced legislation that would allow municipalities the *option* of using voting machines during in-person absentee voting as an alternative to the costly and time-consuming method of processing in-person absentee ballots using envelopes. This legislation is crucial to the effective and efficient management of the increasingly popular absentee voting, particularly during high turnout General Elections.

Like the City of Brookfield, Municipal Clerks across the state have been experiencing an overwhelming public interest with in-person absentee voting. We believe that due to the "convenience factor" along with that fact that absentee voting is heavily promoted by both parties and media outlets alike, the trend will not only continue but will increase markedly with time. In addition to providing municipalities an efficient method to manage the costs and significant investment of time associated with the process of tracking thousands of ballots in envelopes, this option would provide the following benefits:

1. Increases accuracy on ballot. Voters are notified if they made a mistake when marking their ballot when they feed their ballot into the voting equipment. They have the opportunity to correct their own ballot. If the ballot is not fed into the voting equipment until Election Day, the voter does not have the opportunity to correct a mismarked ballot.
2. Reduces the number of ballots being remade by poll workers. Voters can correct and feed their own ballot into the voting equipment.
3. Instills voter confidence that their ballot was counted. Voters feed their own ballot directly into the voting equipment, a true secret ballot.
4. Voters will be marked as voted in the statewide voter registration system instantly.
5. Cost savings to local governments. The referenced legislation reduces personnel and supply costs associated with managing the absentee voting process.

I urge your support of this legislation.

Very truly yours,


Steven V. Ponto
Mayor





Village of Menomonee Falls
156 N8480 Pilgrim Road
Menomonee Falls WI 53051-3140
Telephone: (262) 532-4200

May 28, 2019

State of Wisconsin
Senate Committee on Elections, Ethics, and Rural Issues
State Senator Kathleen Bernier, Chair
State Senator Thomas Tiffany, Vice-Chair
State Senator Dale Kooyenga
State Senator Mark Miller
State Senator Jeff Smith

Re: Senate Bill 193

Dear State Senators:

The Village of Menomonee Falls has realized an increase in in-person absentee voting of seven hundred percent over a twelve year period of time for Presidential Elections; 1,000 in-person absentee voters in November 2004 with an increase to 7,000 in November 2016. The current process of using an envelope to house in-person absentee ballots until Election Day is outdated and does not serve our voters well.

Senate Bill 193 will give municipalities the option of allowing in-person absentee voters to insert their own ballot in voting equipment resulting in a boost to voter confidence and cost savings to municipalities.

Voter Confidence

- Voter confidence is gained when a voter can insert their own ballot in voting equipment.
 - Voting equipment captures an image as the voter inserts their own ballot
- A voter will have the option to correct balloting errors, example: over vote or crossover vote
 - Every in-person absentee voter's votes will be counted
- Eliminates the need for election officials to determine voter intent on Election Day when processing ballots that have balloting errors
- Voters will be marked as voted in the statewide voter database instantly

Municipalities

- Cost savings
 - Thousands of preprinted envelopes
 - Staff time to store, file, and balance thousands of in-person absentee ballots
 - Election officials' time to open thousands of ballots on Election Day

State of Wisconsin
Senate Committee on Elections, Ethics and Rural Issues
May 28, 2019
Page 2

This well thought out Bill will allow municipalities that choose to use it, to take advantage of the technology now available in new voting equipment. You have the ability to change an archaic process that will provide our voters with a more efficient and cost effective approach to in-person absentee voting. I urge you to support Senate Bill 193.

Sincerely,

VILLAGE OF MENOMONEE FALLS



Janice Moyer
Village Clerk/Treasurer

Rep.Tusler

From: Kami L. Lynch <Kami.Lynch@Appleton.org>
Sent: Friday, April 19, 2019 10:13
To: Rep.Tusler; Rep.Sanfelippo; Sen.Bernier; Sen.Tiffany
Cc: Sen.Roth; Rep.Stuck
Subject: LRB-0344 Direct Balloting

Good Morning,

I am contacting each of you to encourage you to support LRB-0344 related to Direct Balloting for in-person absentee voters. The City of Appleton has approximately 40,000 registered voters and for each election the number of voters choosing to vote by absentee ballot is continuously increasing. Last year, to better accommodate the large number of absentee ballots we implemented Central Count, in which the absentee ballots are counted at a separate location from the polling places to reduce the workload, potential errors, and length of the day for our election inspectors. Even with this implementation, the Central Count absentee processors still struggle to complete the opening, numbering and feeding of absentee ballots within the hours of 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Especially with the effect folds have on these ballots inside envelopes, if not folded along the proper scored lines these ballots may need to be recreated causing additional time spent and the use of additional ballots. The proposed initiative would reduce time spent processing in-person absentee ballots, provide voters the peace of mind knowing their ballot was accepted by the equipment with no errors, and substantially reduce costs and time spent on workers and supplies. As this initiative would be optional for municipalities to participate in, it would not place an undue burden on smaller municipalities that may not have a need for this but it would be very effective for those of us that are larger and have over 10,000 absentee ballots to process in a general election. Please support LRB-0344 as we approach a very busy election year in 2020.

If there are any questions that I may help to answer or if you would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kami

Kami Lynch, WCMC
City Clerk

City of Appleton
100 N Appleton Street
Appleton, WI 54911
920-832-6443

Karls-Ruplinger, Jessica

From: Rep.Tusler
Sent: Thursday, May 30, 2019 2:22 PM
To: Butzlaff, Nathan; Duesterbeck, Melodie; Ellerman, Derek; Handrick, Diane; Henning, Anna; Hoisington, Joshua; Hyant, Doug; Karls-Ruplinger, Jessica; Koestler, Justin; Moscicke, Michael; Pearson, Mike; Rep.Brandtjen; Rep.Macco; Rep.Murphy; Rep.Sanfelippo; Rep.Sortwell; Rep.Spreitzer; Rep.Subeck; Rep.Tusler; Rep.Zamarripa
Cc: Nelson, Scott
Subject: FW: Support of SB-193/AB-203

Hello again,

Please see the below email from Marie Moe, Portage City Clerk, in support of AB 203/SB 193.

From: Moe, Marie - MUN <marie.moe@portagewi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 29, 2019 11:14
To: Sen.Bernier <Sen.Bernier@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Tusler <Ron.Tusler@legis.wisconsin.gov>
Subject: Support of SB-193/AB-203

Good Afternoon,

I am writing in support of SB-193/AB-203. This bill would provide municipalities the option to allow In-Person Absentee Voters to feed their own ballot into the machines significantly reducing the costs for municipalities who must manage thousands of ballot envelopes. While my city does not have the thousands of absentee voters that larger municipalities have; we still have the same issues managing the large number of in-office absentee voters in our municipality. In-office absentee voting continues to grow each year. For the 2018 General Election, my office processed 725 in-office voters. This spring, which was a small election, 154 in-office voters were processed. We feel that next year will bring an unprecedented number of absentee voters to my office.

By using this process, the number of potential ballots needing to be remade election night would be reduced. A voter will have the opportunity to correct any errors in their ballot when casting their absentee ballot; something that is not currently available.

Our pollworkers have a difficult time processing the absentee ballots prior to the polls closing, because of processing voters at the polls, which results in a delay in reporting election results.

Please consider supporting this important piece of legislation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Marie A. Moe, WCPC, MMC, City Clerk
City of Portage, Columbia County, Wisconsin
WMCA District IV Co-Director
IIMC Region VI Director
Population: 10,211
Telephone: 608-742-2176 ext. 333

Fax: 608-742-8623
Email: marie.moe@portagewi.gov

The City of Portage is dedicated to building on our past and providing its citizens with a good quality of life in a safe and caring environment.

This email is on a publicly owned system, subject to open records and archival requirements under Wisconsin State Law. This email and any attachments may contain confidential information that is exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you received this email in error, please notify the sender, delete the email and any attachments and do not use, disclose, or store the information it contains

Rep.Tusler

From: Sheryl Hartman <Sheryl.Hartman@greenfieldwi.us>
Sent: Tuesday, May 28, 2019 14:58
To: Rep.Tusler; Rep.Sanfelippo; Sen.Bernier
Cc: Jennifer Goergen
Subject: AVEO-Direct Balloting - May 29th Public hearing input

I am writing to say I support the bill that would allow voters doing in-person absentee voting prior to an election to immediately cast their ballots through the voting machines.

This "direct balloting" option would greatly ease the burden and cost to clerks who now must store these ballots and send them to the polling places on election day to be run through the voting machines.

Voters prefer the security of feeding their own ballots through the machine and seeing them be counted.

If there are mistakes or problems with the way the ballot has been marked, voters can know that immediately and correct their own ballots or spoil them and vote again. Under the current system, in contrast, election workers have to remake these "problem" absentee ballots on election day, according to what is presumed to have been the voter's intent, in the absence of the voter. (If voter intent cannot be determined, the contest in question is left blank on the remade ballot). This entire process consumes valuable time during election day, requires more time and manpower, and adds to election costs.

The popularity of absentee voting is increasing dramatically, and this legislation would update election laws to better fit with the reality of how people want to vote.

Those clerks not wanting to utilize the direct balloting option would not be forced to do so under this legislation. It is flexible and is not a "one size fits all" solution. Clerks could determine what best fits their needs.

I urge you to support this legislation.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Hartman, Deputy Clerk
Greenfield City Clerk's office
7325 W. Forest Home Ave., Room 102
Greenfield, WI 53220-3356
(414) 329-5214 telephone
(414) 543-0591 fax
SherylH@Greenfieldwi.us

Rep. Tusler

From: Jennifer Goergen <Jennifer.Goergen@greenfieldwi.us>
Sent: Tuesday, May 28, 2019 14:04
To: Rep.Tusler; Rep.Sanfelippo
Cc: Mayor Neitzke; Kelly Michaels (michaels@ci.brookfield.wi.us)
(michaels@ci.brookfield.wi.us)
Subject: AVEO-Direct Balloting - Public Hearing Input



Please enter my letter of support into the record at the public hearing on AVEO-Direct Balloting scheduled for Wednesday, May 29th. I am unable to attend as our Board of Review is scheduled at the same time the public hearing is taking place.

I Support AVEO-Direct Balloting. AVEO – Direct Balloting is the complete package. It is a winning solution for everyone. Why? Direct balloting is a flexible solution so clerks who don't want to use it don't have to. Direct balloting is a cost-effective and efficient solution for municipalities with high numbers of in-person voters, as it eliminates the labor and materials used with the current in-person ballot/envelope process. Direct balloting is a solution for voters, as it allows them to see their ballot get counted by the voting machine. Voters can correct mistakes on their ballot while they are present and not have to rely on election workers to decipher their intent. Direct balloting is a modern fit, as it updates our election laws to better fit the technology we use and the reality of how people want to vote today.

Please vote YES to approve the AVEO-Direct Balloting option! Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Goergen, WCMC/CMC
City Clerk
City of Greenfield
7325 W. Forest Home Ave., Room 102
Greenfield, WI 53220
Telephone: (414) 329-5215
Fax: (414) 543-0591
Email: JenniferG@Greenfieldwi.us



131 W. Wilson St., Suite 505
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
phone (608) 267-2380; (800) 991-5502
fax: (608) 267-0645
league@lwm-info.org; www.lwm-info.org

To: Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections
Senate Committee on Elections, Ethics, & Rural Issues

From: Curt Witynski, J.D., Deputy Executive Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities

Date: May 29 2019

Re: AB 203/SB 193, Allowing use of electronic voting machines to cast in-person absentee ballots

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities supports AB 203/SB 193, providing municipalities with the option of using an electronic voting machine for early voters to cast a vote with an in-person absentee ballot. Municipal clerks initiated this sensible bill to provide them with a tool for more efficiently and securely handling the growing number of voters choosing to vote early using an in-person absentee ballot.

This version of the bill is an improvement over last session's. The municipal clerks listened and made changes to their original bill addressing the concerns raised by county clerks, staff for the Wisconsin Elections Commission, and legislators. Additional changes recently requested by the county clerks will also be made by an amendment to the bill.

We urge you to recommend passage of AB 203/SB 193. Thanks for considering our comments.

LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN

612 W. Main Street, #200
Madison, WI 53703

Phone: (608) 256-0827
www.lwwwi.org



May 29, 2019

To: Senate Committee on Elections, Ethics and Rural Issues
Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

Re: Opposition to SB 193 / AB 203

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin has reviewed SB 193 / AB 203, which proposes to change procedures for processing absentee ballots in our state. This legislation offers municipalities the option of adopting a system in which in-person absentee voters may feed their ballots into an electronic voting machine which will scan but not tabulate the ballots. Each day, election officials using this option would be required to reconcile and report the total number of absentee ballots cast. The ballots are then tabulated on Election Day.

Although we appreciate the effort to catch errors early on absentee ballots, we have identified serious problems that override the benefits at this time:

1. This option would reduce opportunities for observation of absentee ballot processing by spreading it out over a period, potentially, of weeks, as opposed to the current system of processing all absentee ballots on Election Day. Amending the bill to allow clerks to feed the absentee ballots into the system all at once at a date close to Election Day would improve transparency, but it would also negate the advantage to the voter.
2. This legislation would create a two-tier system for handling absentee ballots, which could open the state up to constitutional challenges in regards to equal treatment of voters under the law. Right now all absentee ballots, no matter if they are received by the Clerk in-person or via mail, are treated the same way: they are not fed into the machine until Election Day. As such, they are treated equally under the law. This proposal creates a system in which absentee ballots cast in some municipalities are fed into the machine, while ballots in other municipalities are not. Voters in a municipality that adopts this option would have the opportunity to correct an error s/he may have made in casting the ballot, while voters in other municipalities would not.

Because of the constitutional issues this bill would create, we urge you to reject this legislation.

Thank you.

To: Senate and Assembly Elections Committees
From: Paul Malischke, malischke@yahoo.com
Date: May 29, 2019

Please support AB-203 and SB-193 to improve early voting.

These bills are good for voters, for municipal clerks, and for taxpayers. For voters, it provides a more secure and accurate system for early voting, and improves secrecy of the ballot. For our municipal clerks, it will greatly reduce the amount of manual labor that goes in to processing absentee ballots. Reducing their workload will benefit the taxpayer.

For voters, this bill will optimize the voting experience. Under this bill, voting will be identical to Election Day voting. The voter comes into a voting location and, just like on Election Day, states their name and address (section 7, and section 14, page 12).

Just like on Election Day, there can be observers there (section 14, page 12), and the voter could be challenged for cause (section 9).

The voter shows their ID, and gets a ballot. If they need help filling out the ballot, the experts are there to help. If they have special needs, there will be accessible equipment there with capabilities to help them, just as is required on Election Day. If this bill passes, it will be the first time that Wisconsin has mandated that this accessible equipment be available for early voting. (Section 14, page 12).

After filling out the ballot, the voter inserts their ballot directly into the tabulator, and they know it is counted. No more worries about your ballot being rejected due to a problem with the envelope, such as missing voter signature, missing witness signature, missing witness address, or the envelope seal being broken open in handling.

If you accidentally overvote, or crossover in the August partisan primary, you will not lose your vote. The tabulator will alert you and give you a chance to correct your ballot.

When you put your ballot into the tabulator, it captures a digital image of your ballot and stores it. Security is enhanced by storing your ballot both on paper and electronically. (Section 14 page 13).

A flaw of our current system of absentee voting is that secrecy of the ballot is compromised. The voter's name is on the outside of the certificate envelope that contains the ballot. When absentee ballots are processed on Election Day at the polling place, we hope that pollworkers don't pay attention to how the ballot is marked. By contrast, ballots cast under this bill will not have their secrecy compromised.

Please move these bills forward, so this procedure can be used next year.

To: Senate and Assembly Elections Committees
From: Paul Malischke, malischke@yahoo.com
Date: May 29, 2019

Subject: AB-203 and SB-193, Absentee voting

This brief letter is a follow-up to Senator Miller's request for written information on the suggestions I offered that were not in my prepared remarks.

Audits of the vote count

A question was raised at the hearing about the unlikely situation where the tabulator had been corrupted and counted the votes wrong. One important method we have of exposing this is the post-election audit of the vote counts. This consists of a hand count of a small sample of wards, and then the results are compared with the machine counts. The weakness in the current law is that these are only required by statute 7.08(6) for one of every six elections, the November elections. A May 24, 2019 memo on audits is available at <https://elections.wi.gov/node/6528>.

Please consider investigating a bill that would require audits of the vote count for every election.

Future efforts to enhance uniformity

One of the Committee members asked a speaker if she had any suggestions for future efforts to improve uniformity. In my testimony, I suggested looking into any obstacles (legal, technical, or practical) that would affect the ability of several small municipalities to pool their resources and establish one location for early voting for multiple municipalities. Information on "Vote Centers" from NCSL is at <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/vote-centers.aspx>, or simply Google "Vote Center."

Overnight security

A speaker suggested the bill be amended so that the ballots could be kept in the tabulator overnight. I would prefer that my ballot have the highest level of security overnight, meaning inside the clerk's vault. That is the optimum location for preventing damage from fire, flooding, or theft. In addition, the paper ballots should be stored at a different location from the tabulator, which has digital images of the ballots, providing redundant storage.