WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE HEARING RECORDS

2001-02

(session year)

Assembly

Committee on Campaigns & Elections (AC-CE)

File Naming Example:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

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

Published Documents

- > Committee Hearings ... CH (Public Hearing Announcements)
- Committee Reports ... CR
- Executive Sessions ... ES
- Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

Information Collected For Or Against Proposal

- Appointments ... Appt
- > Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule
- Hearing Records ... HR (bills and resolutions)
- >01hr_sb0110_AC-CE_pt01
- <u>Miscellaneous</u> ... Misc

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Vote Record

Assembly - Committee on Campaigns and Elections

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Assembly - Committee on Campaigns and Elections

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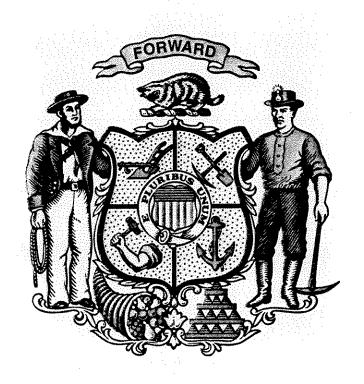
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Assembly - Committee on Campaigns and Elections

Vote Record

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Richard, Rob

From:

Clark, Jessica

Sent:

Friday, March 09, 2001 2:27 PM

To:

*Legislative All Assembly; *Legislative All Senate

Subject:

Sen. Moore/LRB 2774/election reform bill/deadline Friday, March 16, 2001

To: All Legislators

From: State Senator Gwendolynne Moore

Date: March 9, 2001

Re: LRB 2774, Election Reform Proposal

I am introducing legislation which will provide positive and proactive changes to Wisconsin's current election laws without restricting access to the polls. Wisconsin has a proud history of promoting maximum voter turnout, providing straightforward, unfettered access to the ballot box, and maintaining faith in the integrity of its voters. As a result of this progressive tradition, Wisconsin's system consistently produces among the cleanest elections and boasts among the highest voter turnouts in the nation.

While no widespread disenfranchisement occurred in Wisconsin as it did in other states, Election 2000 provided us the unique opportunity to examine the effectiveness of our own election laws and to address several factors which can hinder ballot accuracy and access: understaffed polls, overworked and sometimes under-trained poll workers, language barriers for voters not proficient in English, and the need for greater public education regarding felon and immigrant voting rights.

Specifically, LRB 2774 will:

- Require the court to inform those persons convicted of a felony which renders them ineligible to vote of that ineligibility;
- Require the Department of Corrections to inform a person of his or her voting disqualification when that person is placed on probation or released to parole or extended supervision;
- Require that a standard voter registration form contain a notice advising each registrant of the law with regard to voting eligibility of felons;
- Require every municipality to post a uniform sign at the entrance of each polling place which advises
 electors of the voter eligibility requirements of the state, including those applicable to felons and
 immigrants;
- Require the municipal clerk to instruct election officials in the course of their training with regard to the
 voting eligibility requirements of the state, including those requirements that pertain to felons and
 immigrants;
- Require all municipalities to hold uniform polling hours from 7am-8pm;
- Relax current regulations surrounding a leave of absence for service as an election official for state and local employees;
- Call on the Elections Board to study the costs, benefits, and feasibility of establishing universal registration. If the Board recommends universal registration, the Board must then study the costs, benefits, and feasibility of establishing a statewide voter registration list and address potential problems in the creation, implementation, and maintenance of such a list. The Board would have approximately 9 months to study universal registration and a statewide voter registration list and would be required to report to the legislature its findings and recommendations. This information would provide legislators and citizens with the tools necessary to assess whether or not Wisconsin needs these changes to preserve the integrity of the voting process.
- Establish a Special Committee for the study of multi-lingual voting needs. The Committee, comprised of 4

members of the legislature, 1 member of the Elections Board, 1 representative of the Attorney General, 4 municipal clerks, and 3 members of the public, would, in conjunction with the release of the new census estimates:

- determine if the federal laws with respect to bilingual needs are being effectively and appropriately applied here in Wisconsin,
- determine if any groups of a single language minority, limited English proficiency, and high illiteracy rates are being disenfranchised by English-only ballots and poll workers, and
- determine what measures, if any, Wisconsin should take in order to promote maximum voter turnout among limited English speakers and to ensure that those adversely affected by language barriers have the greatest access to the ballot box possible.
- Create the authority for a municipal clerk or a board of election commissioners to designate any location as a temporary, satellite station for voter registration and absentee voting. Voluntary alternative voting sites would provide easier access to the polls for voters and would assist municipalities in election administration. For example:
 - Satellite stations will provide municipalities a way to reach out to voters by establishing convenient and accessible registration and polling locations, such as senior centers or grocery stores.
 - Satellite stations will help to discourage long lines on election day, which would alleviate the pressures on poll workers and voters alike. Many people are denied the right to vote simply because they cannot afford to wait in line for hours.
 - Municipal clerks or boards of election commissioners retain the authority and responsibility for satellite
 voting, since the election administrators themselves can decide where and when to hold satellite voting.

The LRB analysis of this bill is provided for your reference below. If you would like to sign on as a co-sponsor to LRB 2774, please contact Jessica Clark in my office at 6-5810 or via email at <u>Jessica.Clark@legis.state.wi.us</u> by **Friday, March 16, 2001, at 5:00pm.**

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Absentee voting and voter registration at satellite locations

This bill makes several changes to the election laws and requires studies and recommendations with regard to certain election related issues. The changes include:

Currently, unless an elector votes by absentee ballot, the elector must appear at the polling place serving his or her residence to vote. Polling places are staffed by inspectors who, with limited exceptions, are appointed from nominations submitted by the party committeemen or committeewomen of the two major political parties. If nominations are not submitted, inspectors may be appointed without regard to party affiliation. With limited exceptions, inspectors must be residents of the area served by the polling place where they are employed. Inspectors are public officers who serve two-year terms and must file an oath of office. Inspectors must be compensated by the municipality where they serve.

Current law permits any qualified elector who, for any reason is unable or unwilling to appear at his or her polling place to vote by absentee ballot. With certain limited exceptions, the elector must apply for and obtain an absentee ballot from the appropriate municipal clerk or board of elections commissioners by 5pm on the day before the election. The elector may cast the absentee ballot either by mail or in person at the office of the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners of the municipality where the elector resides. Current law also contains a special procedure that permits certain residents of nursing or retirement homes or community-based residential facilities to apply for and receive an absentee ballot from a special voting deputy who is appointed by the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners an who personally visits the home or facility. These electors give their absentee ballots directly to the special voting deputy, who then delivers the ballots to the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners.

With certain limited exceptions, this bill authorizes the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners of any municipality to designate any location as a temporary, satellite station for absentee voting by electors of the municipality. The location may be inside a building or outdoors and need not be contained in a room separated from other activities. The bill permits any qualified elector of a municipality to obtain and cast an absentee ballot at a satellite station. A satellite station may be open for absentee voting at any time, but only after the official absentee ballots are prepared and before 5pm on the day before the election.

Under the bill, a satellite station must be staffed by at least one special voting deputy who is appointed on a nonpartisan basis by the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners. The bill permits any qualified elector of the state to be appointed as a special voting deputy. The bill specifies certain minimum qualifications for the special voting deputy, such as knowledge of the English language. The municipal clerk or board of election commissioners must instruct the special voting deputy in his or her duties. The special voting deputy may be compensated at the option of the applicable municipality. The special voting deputy is under the supervision of the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners. Under the bill, a special voting deputy is a public officer and must file an oath of office.

If voter registration is required in the municipality, the bill also requires the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners to appoint at least one special registration deputy to staff each satellite station. The bill specifies certain minimum qualifications for the special registration deputy. The bill permits an elector to register at any satellite station at any time during which the station is open for absentee voting. With certain limited exceptions, the elector must follow the registration procedure that would otherwise apply to the elector under current law.

The bill applies certain provisions of current law relating to the operation of polling places to a satellite station established under the bill. For example, the bill requires a satellite station to meet current standards with regard to the accessibility of polling places and requires the posting of information at a satellite station that is generally the same as the information required to be posted at a polling place. However, whereas current law prohibits electioneering on public property within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling place, this bill generally prohibits electioneering in any building in which a satellite station is located at any time during which the satellite station is open. Also, if a satellite station is located outside of a building, the bill generally prohibits electioneering within 100 feet of the satellite station at any time during which the satellite station is open. The same restriction does not apply on private property that is not owned or controlled by the same person as the property where the satellite station is located and does not apply to bumper stickers.

Polling hours

Under current law, the polls at an election in a first, second, or third class city must generally be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. In a village, town, or fourth class city the polls must be open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., unless the village, town, or city determines to extend opening hour to not earlier than 7 a.m. In addition, under current law, certain school district elections are not subject to either of these polling hour requirements. This bill requires the polls at every election to be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. in all municipalities.

Leave for service as an election official

Currently, any public or private employer may grant an employee a leave for service as an election official, or for any other reason, without loss of pay, fringe benefits, or seniority privileges. If an employee is a member of a collective bargaining unit, the employer must first bargain in good faith with any representative of that unit before making a change in leave policy. In addition, state employees are entitled to take time off without loss of pay, fringe benefits, or seniority privileges for service as an election official. Currently, when a state employee receives a leave of absence for service as an election official, the amount of the employee's pay for that service is deducted from the employee's regular paycheck for that leave period. This law applies to employees who are members of collective bargaining units to the extent provided in any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

The bill provides that the law entitling state employees to a leave, without loss of pay, fringe benefits, or seniority privileges, for service as an election official and requiring a paycheck deduction for the amount received for that service applies automatically to represented state employees unless otherwise provided in a

collective bargaining agreement.

The bill also provides that if a local government employer grants a local government employee a leave of absence for service as an election official, the local government must either deduct the amount that the employee receives for that service from the employee's regular paycheck for the leave period, or, if the employee's service was for that same local governmental employer, must require the employee to assign to the local governmental employer to the employee's interest in any compensation for that service. That change applies to both represented and nonrepresented employees irrespective of any applicable collective bargaining agreement. However, the change does not apply to employees who are members of a collective bargaining unit covered by a current collective bargaining agreement until the expiration, extension, modification, or renewal of any collective bargaining agreement containing inconsistent provisions, whichever occurs first.

Voting by felons and immigrants

Current law requires a court to provide a defendant certain information at sentencing. For example, when a court sentences a person or places a person on probation for a felony, the court must inform the person that he or she is prohibited from possessing a firearm. Under this bill, whenever a court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation for a conviction that disqualifies the person from voting, the court must inform the person of that disqualification. The bill also requires the department of corrections to inform the person of the disqualification if the person is released to parole or extended supervision, or, if the person is confined as a condition of probation, upon the person's release to probation.

In addition, the bill requires the standard voter registration form to include a notice advising each registering elector of the law with regard to the voting eligibility of felons and requires each registering elector to certify, the to the best of the electors knowledge, he or she is a qualified elector. The bill also requires every municipality to post a uniform sign on election day at the entrance to each polling place that advises electors of the voting eligibility requirements under the laws of the state, including the voting eligibility requirements applicable to felons and immigrants.

Under current law, the municipal clerk is required to supervise elections and registration in each applicable municipality. Among other things, the municipal clerk must instruct election officials in their duties. This bill specifies that the municipal clerk must also instruct election officials with regard to the voting eligibility requirements under the laws of this state, including the voting eligibility requirements applicable to felons and immigrants.

Elections board studies and recommendations

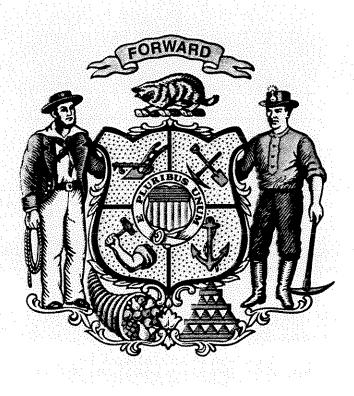
Under current law, every municipality with a population of greater than 5,000 is required to maintain a voter registration list. This bill directs the elections board to study the costs, benefits, and feasibility of and to prepare recommendations with regard to requiring voter registration in every municipality. If the board recommends statewide voter registration, the board must also study the costs, benefits, and feasibility of and prepare recommendations with regard to creating and maintaining a statewide voter registration list. The study must address several issues, which are specified in the bill. The board must submit the results of the studies and all recommendations to the legislature for distribution to the appropriate standing committees of both houses no later than approximately nine months after the bill becomes law.

Special legislative committee for the study of multi-lingual voting needs

Under current law, ballots for elections held in this state are printed in English, and elections inspectors (poll workers) generally must be literate in English. This bill creates a special legislative committee to study multi-lingual voting needs in this state. The bill specifies the qualifications for membership on the committee. The bill requires the committee to study whether federal law requires the use of ballots printed in languages other than English or requires the use of bilingual or multilingual inspectors in this state, and, if so, the extent to which the federal law is being followed. The committee must also study whether and the extent to which the exclusive use of English language ballots and inspectors who are literate only in English prevents electors who are members of particular language minorities in this state and who have no ability, or limited abilities, to speak English from voting. By approximately nine months after the bill becomes a law, the committee must submit to

the legislature its findings and must submit recommendations with regard to maximizing voting in this state by these electors. Under the bill, the committee terminates after making this submission.

For further information see the state and local fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.



Griffiths, Terri

From:

Richard, Rob

Sent:

Thursday, November 29, 2001 8:34 AM

To:

Griffiths, Terri

Subject:

FW: SB 110

----Original Message----

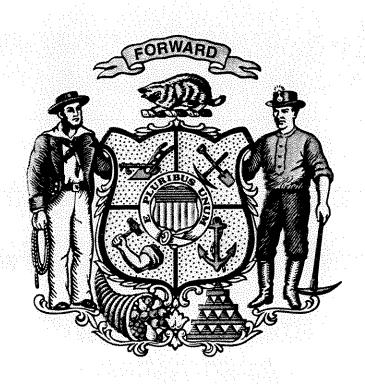
From: Dennis Boyer [mailto:dennisb@chorus.net] Sent: Wednesday, November 28, 2001 4:36 PM

To: Rep.Freese@legis.state.wi.us

Subject: SB 110

Dear Rep.Freese: We at AFSCME wish to reiterate our support of SB 110's general provisions. While some of its elements are outside the area of our expertise, we feel that on the whole it represents a welcome addition to the voting reform discussion. Thank you for the consideration of our views.

Sincerely,
Dennis Boyer, AFSCME Lobbyist





OFFICE OF THE VILLAGE CLERK

N112 W17001 Mequon Road, P.O. Box 337 Germantown, Wisconsin 53022-0337 Phone (262) 250-4740 FAX (262) 253-8255

December 5, 2001

State Senator Alberta Darling 22 South - State Capital P O Box 7882 Madison WI 53707-7882

SENATE BILL 110

Dear Alberta:

It is our understanding that Senate Bill 110 will be the subject of a public hearing on Thursday, December 6th.

We are writing this letter to express our views regarding various aspects of Senate Bill 110, which incorporates some of the proposed legislation offered in Assembly Bills 39, 373 and 259.

we support the concept of state wide registration in all municipalities and the maintaining of a statewide voter registration list, we have concerns which deal with the mechanism of the type of registration list, how it will be implemented, maintained and funded. We at the local level are having a difficult time finding dollars to implement local programs and maintenance of existing facilities. Before we can support the implementation of such a program, we would need to know the cost and staffing needed at the local level. At this time, we can support investigating the possibility of statewide registration and a statewide registration list, but we reserve the right to object to its implementation if too great a burden is placed on us at the local level.

INELIGIBILITY TO VOTE: We whole heartily support notifying a person on probation for a conviction of their ineligibility to vote. We would also suggest that either the county clerk or the local municipal clerk be notified of the ineligibility of the person. Likewise, when the persons voting rights have been restored, both the person and the clerk should again be notified.

Senator Darling December 5, 2001 Page 2

PHOTO-IDENTIFICATION - CORROBORATION OF REGISTRATION: We support the proposal of Assembly Bill 259 which would require the use of a photo-identification card for voter registration, voting absentee and voting at the polling place. Hopefully, this will avoid any future voting irregularities. Our only comment, is that there be a statewide effort to educate the public of this new requirement. We can envision numerous complaints from individuals who forgot to bring their drivers license or photo ID with them to the polling location, and there is not sufficient time for them to go home and get it. This may disenfranchise previously qualified and registered voters. However, it would also do away with people improperly voting. We likewise do not support corroboration of registration by another person for registering to vote. While I would like to think most people are honest, this past election has proven that getting the vote out is more important than one's honesty and integrity.

SATELLITE ABSENTEE VOTING LOCATIONS: We are opposed to this proposal. First of all, most municipalities hold special registration and absentee voting hours. We do this over and above our normal hours and accomplish our other work besides. For a municipal clerk to oversee several other satellite absentee voting locations, plus finding the manpower to operate these locations, is not realistic. In most cases we have problems finding people to work on election day, let alone establishing satellite locations during non-conventional hours. People have the ability to request an absentee ballot by mail, for NO REASON. Therefore, a ballot can be mailed to the persons home well in advance of election day.

MULTILINGUAL VOTING NEEDS: We believe the State several years ago considered making English the language of the State. We believe this needs to be done. The State as well as local municipalities continue to look for ways to decrease costs and therefore taxes. By requiring ballots be printed in languages other than English we are adding to the cost of the taxpayers of this State. We also then need to either have current staff learn another language or hire additional personnel who can speak additional languages. When our ancestors came to this land, in order to communicate, they had to learn the language of the land. Likewise, when immigrants come to this country, they need to learn the language of the land - English. If we move to France, we need to learn French, the language of the land. While we are a melting pot of may nationalities, in order for us to survive as one nation, we need to have a common language. If people chose to retain their native language as a secondary language fine, but first they need to learn our language - English. Therefore, we strongly oppose including a study to require the printing of ballots in other languages.

Senator Darling December 5, 2001 Page 3

Earlier this year a public hearing was held in Milwaukee regarding election reform. At that time the following comments were presented to the Committee for consideration. We again offer these comments:

"Recent changes in election laws, while making it more convenient for residents, have removed the safe guards that have insured that Wisconsin has clean elections. The Elections Board has indicated that some of the requirements have been relaxed because we are a "clean state" and the convenience allows more people to vote. If Wisconsin has a reputation for clean elections, why would we change our laws to make it easier for someone to commit voter fraud?

You have placed the responsibility of maintaining the integrity of the election process squarely on the shoulders of the local Municipal Clerk and the people who have volunteered to be election officials. We have accepted that responsibility and do the best we can. But what about the citizens? Do they not have a responsibility? We believe their responsibility is to register to vote in advance of election day, to become familiar with the candidates and their positions so that on election day they can make informed decisions, and to then properly cast a ballot for the candidates of their choice."

We ask that as the Senate considers changes to election laws, they do so in an effort to not only insure the ability of every qualified citizen the right to vote, but to insure the integrity and honesty of the election process.

Sincerely,

Jane A. Wilms, MMC

Village Clerk

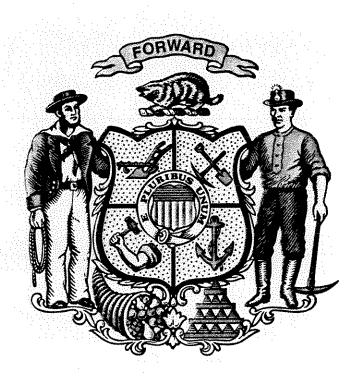
Christine M. Micka

Christine M Micka

Deputy Village Clerk

cc: Representative Susan Jeskewitz
Representative Stephen J. Freese
Representative Scott Walker

Representative Bonnie Ladwig





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Member: Joint Finance Committee

Board Member: Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

Senator Moore's Testimony on SB 110

Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections Thursday, December 6, 2001 Room 300 Northeast 10:00 a.m.

Good morning. I would like to thank Chairman Freese and the Committee for holding today's public hearing on Senate Bill 110. This legislation will provide positive changes to Wisconsin's current election laws without restricting access to the polls, and I appreciate the Committee's time and attention on this important matter.

Wisconsin has a proud history of clean, honest, and inclusive elections. While accusations alleging multiple voting and widespread intentional voter fraud during the November 2000 elections were proven false, the attention given to Wisconsin's election system revealed some areas where changes are needed. Lines at the polls are often too long, poll workers are often overwhelmed and overworked, language barriers provided impediments to the voting process for non-native English speakers, and the public at large is often uninformed about voter eligibility laws.

As a result, I crafted SB 110 specifically to address those problems and provide effective solutions to correct them. By focusing on understaffed polls, overworked and sometimes under-trained poll workers, language barriers for voters not proficient in English, physical barriers and privacy conflicts for disabled voters, and the need for greater public education regarding felon and immigrant voting rights, this bill is a true election *reform* bill.

Specifically, SB 110 would do the following:

• Spearhead an educational campaign about voter eligibility in order to prevent erroneous voting by ineligible voters.

After the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported in January 2001 that hundreds of felons mistakenly voted in the November elections, I called for an educational campaign about voter eligibility laws. I have remained dedicated to this educational campaign, despite the fact that Milwaukee County District Attorney E. Michael McCann found cause to bring charges against only three of those 361 felons who

were reported to have violated the law, and, due to a lack of evidence, dropped those charges. While we know that no widespread voter fraud occurred, it is evident that a significant number of people in the Milwaukee community and around the state do not know the state's laws regarding voter eligibility. As such, SB 110 will:

- ⇒ Require the court and the Department of Corrections to inform a person of his or her voting disqualification,
- ⇒ Require that a standard voter registration form contain a notice advising registrants of voting eligibility of felons,
- ⇒ Require every municipality to post a uniform sign at each polling place advising electors of Wisconsin's voter eligibility requirements, including those applicable to felons and immigrants, and
- ⇒ Increase training of election officials regarding to including those requirements that pertain to felons and immigrants.
- Establish uniform polling hours from 7am to 8pm in municipalities with a population of 8,000 or more.

This measure will ensure voters have the greatest poll access possible on election day. The bill as I originally introduced it called for uniform polling hours in all municipalities. However, it was amended on the Senate floor to require uniform polling hours in municipalities with 8,000 or more inhabitants.

• Relax current regulations surrounding a leave of absence for service as an election official for state and local employees.

This revision to current law will:

- ⇒ Ensure that those state and local employees who want to assist their localities as a poll worker can do so without creating conflict at their workplace.
- ⇒ Provide greater opportunities for increasing the pool of available poll workers.
- Require the Elections Board to study the costs, benefits, and feasibility of requiring universal registration, establishing a statewide voter registration list in Wisconsin, polling place staffing needs, and the use of separate registration locations.

The study will:

- ⇒ Provide legislators and citizens with the tools necessary to assess if changes to current registration law are necessary to preserve the integrity of the voting process.
- ⇒ Address whether Wisconsin can afford the price tag of implementing such a system. Indiana, a state comparable in size to Wisconsin, estimates the cost of establishing a statewide voter registration list for its 4 million registered voters to be roughly \$6 million.
- ⇒ Ensure that the Elections Board carefully examine all facets of such a list and, if the Elections Board recommends creating such a list, the Board must ensure that no eligible electors are mistakenly removed from the rolls. Thousands of Florida

voters were disenfranchised when the State of Florida erroneously removed their names from Florida's statewide voter registration list. Wisconsin's citizens do not want Florida's flawed system here.

This section of SB 110 was amended to require the Elections Board to study:

- ⇒ The need to provide additional inspectors and special registration deputies to serve at polling places in general elections; and,
- ⇒ The feasibility of making greater use of separate locations for registration of electors at polling places on election day.
- Establish a Special Legislative Committee for the study of the voting needs of multilingual and physically disabled electors.

Armed with the new census figures for the state, this Committee will play an important role in ensuring that all of Wisconsin's diverse language minorities are being represented at the polls. This Committee, to be comprised of legislators, election officials, a member of the Attorney General's office, and members of the public would:

- ⇒ Determine if the federal laws with respect to multilingual needs are being effectively and appropriately applied here in Wisconsin;
- Determine if any groups of a single language minority, limited English proficiency, and high illiteracy rates are being disenfranchised by English-only ballots and poll workers;
- Establish what measures Wisconsin should take in order to promote maximum voter turnout and ballot access among limited-English speakers.
- ⇒ Determine if physically disabled voters have adequate access to polling places and voting equipment;
- ⇒ Determine if physically disabled voters have adequate privacy protections
- ⇒ Establish what measures Wisconsin should take in order to promote maximum voter turnout, site access, and ballot access among physically disabled electors.
- Provide municipalities with the option of establishing "satellite voting stations" to register voters and accept absentee ballots during the month before the election.

Many people are denied the right to vote simply because they cannot afford to wait in line for hours or have limited mobility. SB 110 establishes that:

- ⇒ A municipal clerk or a board of election commissioners can designate any location as a temporary, satellite station for voter registration and absentee voting. Voluntary alternative voting sites could be established at convenient locations like grocery stores and in areas where voter mobility is lower like senior centers or retirement communities. This bill leaves the responsibility and decision making about satellite voting in the hands of the municipal clerks, as they can decide where, when, and if to hold satellite voting.
- ⇒ Non-partisan volunteers can be deputized by the municipal clerks to act as Special Voting Deputies to staff the satellite stations. This provision would allow groups

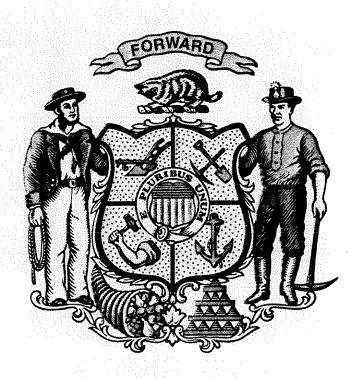


like the League of Women Voters, for example, to volunteer to work at the satellite station, and would be little more burden to clerks than the current system already includes.

- ⇒ Satellite stations will provide municipalities a way to reach out to voters by:
 - establishing convenient and accessible registration,
 - preventing long lines on election day, and,
 - alleviating the pressures on poll workers and voters alike.

Wisconsin's open election laws are some of the best and most progressive in the nation, based on the promotion of maximum voter turnout and in the fundamental belief in the integrity of our citizens. SB 110 is a comprehensive election reform package that offers constructive solutions to the problems we have experienced with our election system in the past. By educating our voters, assisting our poll workers, and working to increase voter access to the ballot, we can make further inroads in the effort to ensure that our elections as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

I thank the Committee for its time and I welcome any questions that members might have.



ASSOCIATED TYPE PASSOCIA SASSISSON

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Testimony to the Wisconsin State Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

December 6, 2001

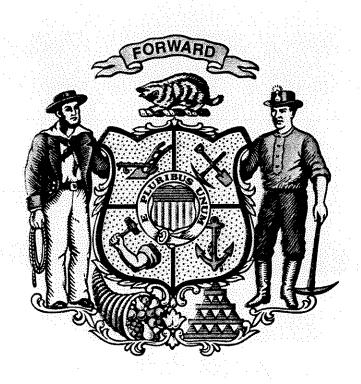
Mr. Chairman and Members of the subcommittee, ladies and gentleman, I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you today regarding Senate Bill 110. I would like to start by stating that I am not an election commissioner, a poll worker, or a legislator. I am a voter and a citizen. As a result, my knowledge and expertise extend no further then my own opinion and experience. I am speaking to you today from the perspective of a citizen, a citizen who wants the voting system within this state to be the best it can be. As the 2000 elections show, there are problems within the state-wide and nation-wide elections process. I will not waste your time discussing these problems: I am neither qualified nor interested in doing so. What I am interested in focusing on are the solutions, and Senate Bill 110 is an excellent step forward in the reform of electoral administration. The bill creates a new and innovative option toward helping absentee voters participate in elections, and sets a sound framework for researching the problems our great state should be focusing on in its reform of election guidelines. While I support the bill in its entirety, I will address specifically the satellite voting center and multilingual research provisions of this bill.

First, what I consider to be one of the most critical stipulations of this bill is the provision allowing municipal clerks and election commissioners to create temporary satellite stations for absentee voters. Voters are unable to attend the polls on Election Day for a host of reasons. Students, Senior Citizens, and Physically Handicapped

individuals are all examples of people who may have a need to vote in a satellite station. Let me emphasize that anyone may have a need or desire to file an absentee ballot. To illustrate the need for this innovation however, I will focus on these three groups with clearly special circumstances. First, students. There are over 140,000 students in the UW system; in addition, there are tens of thousands in both the WI technical schools and WI private colleges. Obviously they are a substantial portion of the voting population. Students, who are possibly some of the best-informed voters, often have hectic class schedules that do not leave room for a visit to the polls. Satellite centers would allow students the option of voting without jeopardizing their academic life; they would no longer have to spend hours attempting to vote the day before an exam in a hectic polling center. Second, senior citizens. According to Census 2000, citizens 65 years of age and older comprise 13.1% of the Wisconsin State population. That's over 702,000 individuals! While many of these individuals are fully capable of reaching the polls, many are not. Senate Bill 110 would allow the creation of satellite voting sites in places more accessible to the elderly, such as senior centers. This would help facilitate greater voter turnout among our respected seniors. Third, physically handicapped individuals or those people with circumstances making it difficult or impractical for them to physically reach a crowded polling center on Election Day. This bill would allow satellite sites to be created in places more accessible to handicapped individuals, as well as allowing them to vote without the trouble of navigating bustling, crowded voting centers. This would open the opportunity to vote to many individuals, and make voting easier for many more. Finally, Senate Bill 110 leaves the creation of satellite voting centers to the discretion of the municipality, ensuring every city and town can uniquely tailor their voting experience to fit the needs of its residents – this will ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

I would also like to touch on the studies required by this bill. Senate Bill 110 also requires studies on a variety of election issues, including but not limited to multilingual voting needs. Currently, ballots are printed in English and poll workers need only be literate in english. As the diversity of Wisconsin's population grows however, the need for sensitivity to non-english speaking electors grows more and more important. According to Census 2000, 14.9% of Wisconsin's population classifies themselves as part of an ethnic minority either as part or full of their ethnic heritage. Specifically, 6.1% classify themselves as African American, 3.6% as Hispanic or Latino, 1.9% as Asian, 1.3% as American Indian and Alaska Native, and 2% are classified as some other race. Obviously, a substantial portion of these people understands and speaks English. However, it is not known how many of them do not, and as a result are effectively barred from taking part in the election process. This bill would allow for research into the need for multi-lingual election materials, and establish whether or not Wisconsin is in compliance with federal law.

In conclusion, I would like to restate my belief that Senate Bill 110 is an innovative and dynamic step into voter reform in the 21st century. It will pave the way into a century where voting in Wisconsin will be the most effective, fair, accessible, and efficient system possible. Thank-you.





The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, Inc.

122 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703-2500 608/256-0827 FX: 608/256-2853 EM: genfund@lwvwi.org URL: http://www.lwvwi.org

Statement to the Assembly Committee on Campaign and Elections in Support of SB 110 Relating to Election Law Reform

Thursday, December 6, 2001

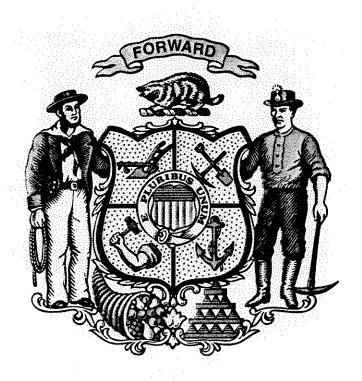
The League of Women Voters has as a top priority the education for and the involvement of citizens in the political process. We strive to increase the numbers of voters and to maximize information for citizens about candidates and the issues.

We believe that SB 110 will help achieve these goals, and therefore, we endorse the bill. Specifically, reducing barriers to voting by allowing satellite facilities for absentee voting may well increase the number of people who exercise their right to vote and reduce lines at the polls. Providing clear information on the registration card and through posters at polling places regarding who can and cannot vote will reduce any confusion about who is eligible to vote. Making polling hours uniform in most municipalities should also reduce any confusion on the part of voters.

This bill also recognizes that the population of Wisconsin is changing. Authorizing a study to determine how best to address the needs of citizens who do not have English as their primary language will help shape future electoral policy that effectively broadens the voter base. The same will be true of a study of establishing a statewide voter registration list and of related issues.

On the subject of satellite facilities, we suggest that procedures be developed which determine the appropriate siting of such facilities. Preference should be given to those in low voter turnout districts or should provide a balance (if choices need to be made) among districts with different voting patterns (e.g., satellites in both Republican and Democratic districts). Since the satellites should, however, be low-cost (presumably, the organization requesting the satellite would provide the poll workers), there should not have to be too may choices. Most importantly we believe that these satellites will have the potential to be an ongoing avenue for increasing the participation of citizens in the voting/democratic process.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.



WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

Written Testimony Submitted to the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections in Support of Senate Bill 110

Bv The Wisconsin Education Association Council December 6, 2001

The Wisconsin Education Association Council is committed to maintaining Wisconsin's reputation as a state that conducts free, fair and clean elections. WEAC also believes that reforms should be comprehensive, equitable, and practical. These are goals in campaign finance reform that will benefit everyone in the community.

The 2000 elections showed that our current elections system needs improving. The most common complaint heard regarding the 2000 elections was the congestion and workload that poll workers had to endure on Election Day. Senate Bill 110 makes several changes to our election law that are designed to ease overcrowding and congestion, as well as provisions lessen the chance of voter fraud.

Senate Bill 110 creates satellite absentee voting stations, giving more people an opportunity to register and/or cast a ballot prior to election day, which will help alleviate the problems of overcrowding and long lines at polling places on election day.

Senate Bill 110 requires uniform polling hours (7 a.m. to 8 p.m.), and provides local units of government the ability to give workers the day off to work as election officials without losing pay, benefits, or seniority. Both these provisions would allow for smoother operation of polling places on Election Day by providing more hours for people to vote and more people to staff polling places.

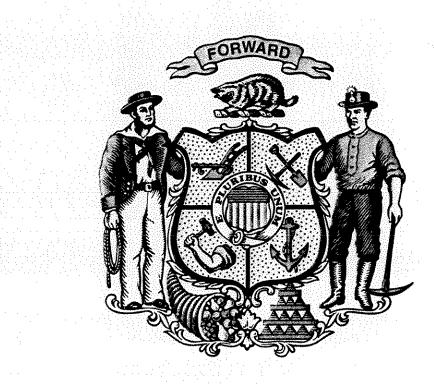
Finally, this bill requires the elections board to examine the creation of a statewide polling list, and it creates a special legislative committee to study multilingual and disability voting needs in this state. This bill also heightens the notification procedures for convicted felons, which will help reduce the chances of people voting who have lost that right.

WEAC encourages the committee to take action on practical measures that will improve elections in Wisconsin by passing Senate Bill 110.

Please feel free to contact Brandon Rettke, WEAC Government Relations Specialist, with any comments or questions. Brandon can be reached by e-mail at rettkeb@weac.org or by phone at 1-800-554-4168.

> Stan Johnson, President Michael A. Butera, Executive Director







511 Memorial Union, 800 Langdon Street, Madison, WI 53706 · www.asm.wisc.edu phone: 608.265.4ASM · fax: 608.265.5637 · asm@macc.wisc.edu

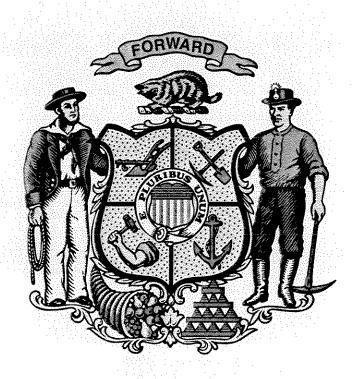
TESTIMONY OF FAITH KURTYKA Hearing on SB 110 Dec. 6, 2001

My name is Faith Kurtyka and I am the Legislative Director for the Associated Students of Madison (ASM), the student government here at UW-Madison. I would like to speak about the section of SB 110 addressing satellite polling locations to register voters and accept absentee ballots the month before the election.

I spearheaded ASM's Vote 2000 campaign last year, so I can personally attest to the problems of inconvenient polling locations for students. The two main reasons that students did not vote in the election was that they either did not know where to vote or did not have time on election day to vote. This bill solves both these problems through the use of satellite polling locations. Satellite stations will be able to accept absentee ballots from students, and will ensure shorter lines on Election Day, saving time for students and pollworkers. In our campaign last year, we ran vans around campus all day to get students to the polls, because often students live significantly far away from where they are supposed to vote. Satellite polling locations would alleviate this problem by providing a more accessible poll. Many students also did not know how to register. Satellite stations can also conveniently register voters in the month before elections.

This bill enfranchises students on the electoral process and ensures that their voices are heard. Passing this bill shows that you as legislators care about empowering your constituencies to get out and rock the vote. I strongly encourage you to vote in favor if Senate Bill 110. Thank you for your time.

Faith Kurtyka





WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STAFF MEMORANDUM

TO: MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

FROM: Robert J. Conlin, Senior Staff Attorney

RE: Assembly Amendments 1 to 8 to Engrossed 2001 Senate Bill 110, Relating to Various

Election Law Changes

DATE: December 10, 2001

This memorandum briefly summarizes Assembly Amendments 1 through 8 to Engrossed 2001 Senate Bill 110, relating to various election law changes. Senate Bill 110 was introduced by Senator Moore and others and was cosponsored by Representative Travis and others. The bill, as amended by several amendments, passed the Senate on May 8, 2001 on a vote of Ayes, 18, Noes, 15. The bill was referred to the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections on the same date. On May 14, 2001, the bill was printed engrossed at the direction of the Assembly Chief Clerk.

On June 5, 2001, the bill was withdrawn from the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections and referred to the Committee on Rules. On June 7, the bill was placed on the Assembly calendar of June 12, 2001. On June 12, several amendments, described herein, were introduced. Assembly Amendment 1 was laid on the table. A point of order was raised that Assembly Amendment 2 was not germane. The point of order was taken under advisement. Subsequently, on November 6, 2001, the chair ruled the point of order well taken. The bill was then rereferred to the Committee on Campaigns and Elections, which held a public hearing on the bill on December 6, 2001.

The remainder of this memorandum summarizes Assembly Amendments 1 through 8.

Assembly Amendment 1

Assembly Amendment 1 was introduced by Representative Powers.

Generally, Assembly Amendment 1 modifies current law by eliminating punch card voting in Wisconsin and creates an appropriation authorizing funds to assist certain municipalities transition from a punch card voting system to another electronic voting system and to provide training to election officials in those municipalities in the use of the new system.

Specifically, with respect to the transitional aid provided in the amendment, the amendment requires the Elections Board to provide financial assistance to municipalities that used punch card electronic voting systems at the 2001 Spring Election and to counties in which municipalities that used punch card electronic voting systems at the 2001 Spring Election are wholly or partly contained, to enable the municipalities to employ another type of electronic voting system, and to provide training for election officials in the use of the replacement systems. According to information obtained from the Web site of the Elections Board, 22 municipalities use, or recently used, the punch card voting system. It appears that all of those municipalities are in Green County. The amendment appropriates \$180,000 general purpose revenue (GPR) in the 2001-02 fiscal year for this financial assistance.

Under the amendment, the elimination of punch card electronic voting systems takes effect on January 1, 2002.

As noted above, Assembly Amendment 1 was laid on the table on June 12, 2001.

Assembly Amendment 2

Assembly Amendment 2 was introduced by Representatives Freese and Walker.

Generally, Assembly Amendment 2 requires those seeking to vote or those seeking to register to vote on election day to present either a driver's license or a Wisconsin identification (ID) card. With respect to the state-issued ID card, the amendment provides that if, due to economic hardship, an applicant for such a card claims to be unable to pay the \$9 fee for issuance or renewal of such a card, the Department of Transportation must issue the card without charge.

Under the amendment, voters who have obtained a confidential poll listing because they are victims of domestic abuse are not required to show a driver's license or state ID card and may instead present a voting ID card issued by the municipality in which the person resides. Finally, under the amendment, electors applying for an absentee ballot by mail need not present an ID to receive a ballot or vote, but electors obtaining an absentee ballot in person or voting at the polls must present an ID. Under the amendment, if a person cannot present a photo ID, the person is ineligible to vote.

As noted above, Assembly Amendment 2 was determined to be *nongermane* on November 6, 2001.

Assembly Amendment 3

Assembly Amendment 3 was introduced by Representatives Freese and Travis.

Generally, under Senate Bill 110, a local unit of government may permit its employees to serve as election officials without loss of fringe benefits, seniority privileges, loss of pay or any other penalty. Under the bill, an employee of a local governmental unit who obtains a paid leave of absence for service as an election official must certify in writing to the head of the local governmental unit by which he or she is employed the amount of compensation that the employee receives for service as an election official. That amount must be deducted from the employee's pay earned for the scheduled working hours. However, under the bill, if the local governmental unit is also the employer for purposes of the employee's service as an election official, the local governmental unit may require the employee, before

the service begins, to assign his or her interest in any compensation earned for the service as an election official to the local governmental unit. If the employee makes this certification, the employee would receive no paycheck for the service as an election official and would have no deduction made from his or her regular paycheck.

Assembly Amendment 3 also authorizes a local governmental unit to grant leave to its employees to serve as election officials without loss of benefits, as under the bill. However, Assembly Amendment 3 does not include the certification provision which would enable an employee to assign his or her pay for service as an election official to the local governmental unit for which he or she is otherwise employed.

Assembly Amendment 4

Assembly Amendment 4 was introduced by Representative Freese.

Assembly Amendment 4 amends current law with respect to the training and certification of certain election officials. Generally, the amendment provides that the Elections Board must prescribe requirements for certification of individuals to serve as *chief inspectors*. Under the amendment, no individual may serve as the chief inspector at a polling place unless the individual is certified by the Elections Board to hold that office. The Board is required to issue certificates to qualified individuals who apply to be certified if those individuals meet the requirements established by the Elections Board. Each certificate issued must carry an expiration date. Additionally, the Board must require each certified individual to meet requirements to maintain that certification. The Board is required to renew the certificate of any individual who requests renewal and who meets the requirements set out by the Board for the position. The amendment also requires the Board to conduct regular training and administer examinations to ensure that individuals who are certified by the Board are knowledgeable concerning their authority and responsibilities. The Board is required to pay all costs required to conduct the training and to administer the examinations from a separate appropriation created in the amendment.

The amendment provides a biennial GPR appropriation of \$45,000 in fiscal year 2001-02 for training of chief inspectors.

The amendment also does the following: (1) requires municipalities to provide daily compensation for attendance at chief inspector training sessions and examinations; (2) authorizes municipal clerks and boards of election commissioners to establish different working hours for different officials assigned to the same polling place; and (3) requires alternate officials to be appointed in a number sufficient to maintain adequate staffing at polling places.

Assembly Amendment 5

Assembly Amendment 5 was introduced by Representatives Freese and Walker.

Generally, Senate Bill 110 authorizes the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners of any municipality to designate any location as a temporary satellite station for absentee voting by electors of the municipality. The bill permits any qualified elector of a municipality to obtain and cast an absentee ballot at a satellite station. The satellite station may be open for absentee voting at any time,

but only after the official absentee ballots are prepared and before 5:00 p.m. on the day before the election.

Assembly Amendment 5 deletes the provisions of the bill relating to satellite voting stations.

Assembly Amendment 6

Assembly Amendment 6 was introduced by Representatives Freese and Travis.

Generally, under current law, the polls in a first, second or third class city must be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. In a village, town, or fourth class city (cities with a population of less than 10,000), polls must be open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., unless the village, town, or city determines to extend the opening hour to not earlier than 7:00 a.m. Senate Bill 110 requires the polls to be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. in all municipalities with a population of 8,000 or more. In other municipalities, the polls must be open from 9:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m., but may be extended by the governing body to not earlier than 7:00 a.m.

Assembly Amendment 6 creates uniform polling hours throughout the state from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., regardless of the size of the municipality conducting the election.

Assembly Amendment 7

Assembly Amendment 7 was introduced by Representative Freese.

Generally, under current law, voter registration is required in municipalities with a population over 5,000 people. In smaller municipalities, voter registration is optional.

Senate Bill 110 directs the Elections Board to study the costs, benefits, and feasibility of and to prepare recommendations with regard to requiring voter registration in every municipality. If the Board recommends statewide voter registration, the Board must also study the costs, benefits, and feasibility of and prepare recommendations with regard to creating and maintaining a statewide voter registration list. The study must address a number of issues that are specified in the bill, including the following:

- 1. How the list should be created and maintained.
- 2. The fiscal impact upon the state and local governments of maintaining the list.
- 3. How accuracy of the list should be ensured.
- 4. Whether, to use the list, an electronic connection would need to be established between each polling place in the state and the Board and how such a connection would be established and maintained.
 - 5. How same-day registrations would be integrated into the list.
- 6. How procedures for corroboration of the identities of electors would be affected by maintenance of the list.
 - 7. How absentee balloting would be affected by the creation of the list.

- 8. The impact of maintenance of the list upon transient populations, such as college students.
- 9. How the list could be accurately purged of the names of convicted felons who are ineligible to vote while ensuring that no eligible electors are disenfranchised.
- 10. How the list should be purged of the names of ineligible or inactive electors while ensuring that no eligible electors are disenfranchised.
 - 11. Whether the list should be maintained by a public or private entity.
- 12. The standards to which a private entity should be held to account if the list were privately maintained.
 - 13. How provisional voting of challenged electors could be facilitated.

The results of the studies and all of the Board's recommendations must be submitted to the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature no later than approximately nine months after the bill becomes law.

Assembly Amendment 7 requires registration in every municipality. In addition, the amendment deletes the electronic registration study provisions contained in the bill. Instead, the amendment requires the Elections Board to compile and maintain electronically an official registration list. The list must contain the name and address of each registered elector in the state and such other information as the Board prescribes by rule. Except for the addresses of electors who have obtained a confidential listing because of domestic abuse, the list must be open to public inspection and should be electronically accessible by any person. However, no person other than an election official who is authorized by a municipal clerk may make a change in the list.

The list must be electronically accessible by name and must also be accessible in alphabetical order of the elector's name for the entire state and for each county, municipality and ward and combination of wards. The list must be designed so that the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners of any municipality may electronically add, revise or remove entries on the list for any elector who resides in, or who the list identifies as residing in, that municipality and no other municipality.

The Board may not make any changes in entries to the registration list. Additionally, whenever a municipal clerk receives a valid registration or valid change of a name or address under an existing registration, and whenever a municipal clerk cancels a registration, the municipal clerk is required to enter electronically on the registration list the information required by the Board except that the municipal clerk may update any entries that change on the date of an election in the municipality within 10 days after that date.

The town clerk of any town having a population of 5,000 or less may designate the county clerk of the county where the town is located as the town clerk's agent to carry out the functions of the town clerk with respect to the maintenance of the list. The clerk must notify the county clerk of such a designation in writing and may similarly discontinue the designation. If the town clerk designates a county clerk as his or her agent, the town clerk must immediately forward all registration changes filed with the town clerk to the county clerk for electronic entry on the registration list.

The provisions of the amendment relating to the statewide voter registration take effect on September 1, 2003.

Assembly Amendment 8

Assembly Amendment 8 was introduced by Representative Powers.

Assembly Amendment 8, like Assembly Amendment 1, eliminates punch card voting in Wisconsin, but provides that the Department of Administration must enter into a master lease agreement under current law on behalf of the Elections Board to obtain sufficient electronic voting system equipment suitable for use with an electronic voting system to be used in those municipalities required to eliminate punch card voting systems. The Board is required to sublease the equipment to any county with such affected municipalities. The amendment authorizes the Elections Board to seek supplemental funding from the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) to make the lease payments required by the amendment. The approval process for the JFC is similar to a "passive review" process under current law.

Assembly Amendment 1 to Assembly Amendment 8 makes a technical correction to the amendment.

If you have any questions about these amendments, please feel free to contact me at the Legislative Council Staff offices.

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