

WISCONSIN STATE
LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

2003-04

(session year)

Assembly

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on
Campaigns &
Elections
(AC-CE)

File Naming Example:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

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

Published Documents

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

➤ **

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ **

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

➤ **

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ **

*Information Collected For Or
Against Proposal*

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤ **

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

**

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

➤ **03hr_ajr0015_AC-CE_pt01**

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ **

March 25, 2003

Representative Stephen Freese
Room 115 West, State Capitol
PO Box 8952
Madison, WI. 53708-8952

Dear Representative Freese,

The elected officials of Lafayette County would like to go on record as opposing AJR15 which would allow counties to appoint sheriff's, district attorneys, county clerks, treasurer's, registers of deeds, coroners, surveyors and clerks of circuit court. We hope you will not support this bill but will support four year terms for elected officials.

Sincerely,




Joe Boll, Register of Deeds



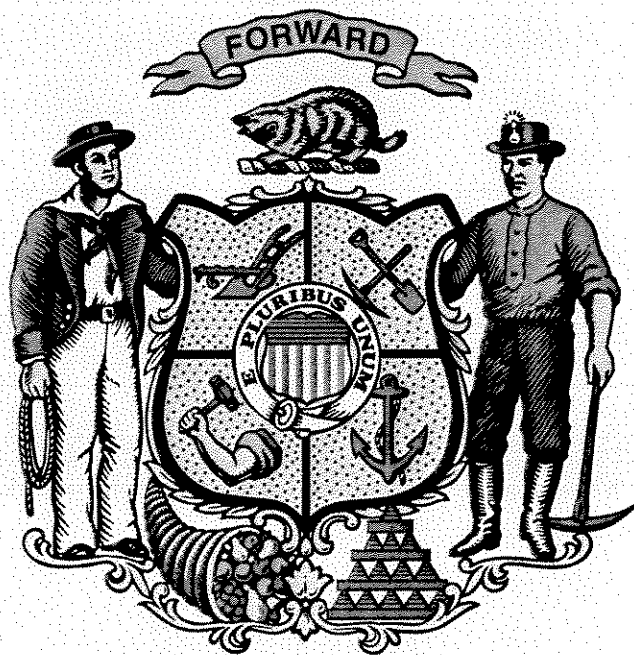
Becky Taylor, Treasurer



Catherine McGowan, Clerk of Court



Linda Bawden, County Clerk



Griffiths, Terri

From: Richard, Rob
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2003 8:14
To: Griffiths, Terri
Subject: FW: AJR 15

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

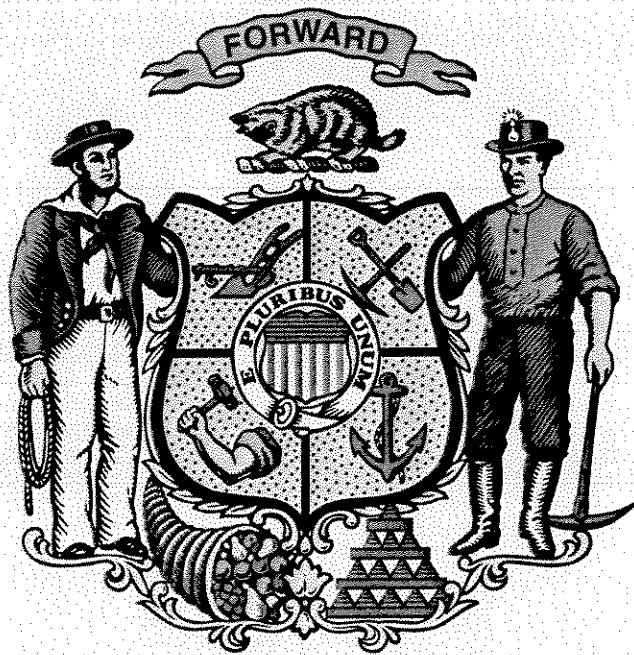
From: Edna Highland [mailto:EHighlan@co.kenosha.wi.us]
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2003 3:54 PM
To: 'Rep.Freese@legis.state.wi.us'; 'Rep.Grothman@legis.state.wi.us'; 'Rep.Gundrum@legis.state.wi.us';
'Rep.Kreuser@legis.state.wi.us'; 'Rep.Kerkman@legis.state.wi.us'; 'Rep.Steinbrink@legis.state.wi.us'
Subject: AJR 15

I am not in favor of AJR 15. These positions should remain elected by the people. The privilege of choosing should remain with the voters. I hope you will take this into consideration.

Thank you.

Edna R. Highland
Kenosha County Clerk

*EDNA HIGHLAND
COUNTY CLERK
(262)653-2477*



Griffiths, Terri

From: Richard, Rob
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2003 8:14 AM
To: Griffiths, Terri
Subject: FW: Legislative Issues

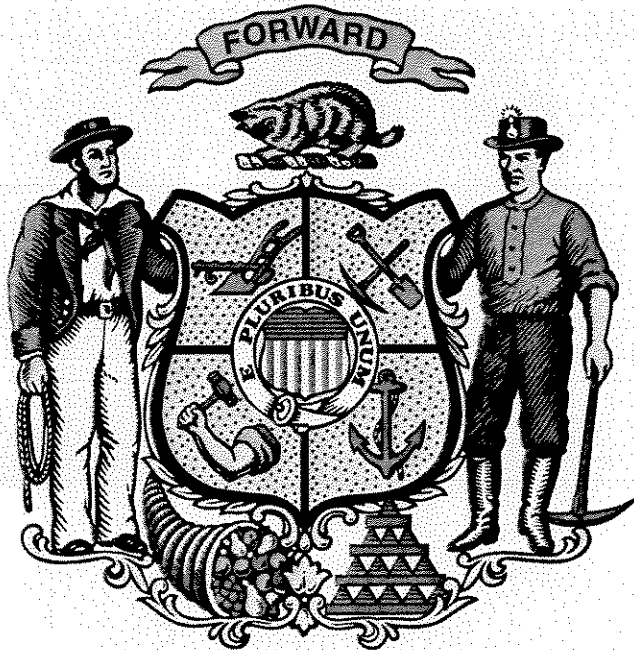
-----Original Message-----

From: Marilyn.Merten@co.washington.wi.us
[mailto:Marilyn.Merten@co.washington.wi.us]
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2003 3:05 PM
To: Rep.Grothman@legis.state.wi.us; Rep.Freese@legis.state.wi.us;
Rep.Gundrum@legis.state.wi.us; Rep.Wood@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Legislative Issues

AJR-15. DO NOT support this legislation. Allow the public the right to elect its representatives. What can happen is that a county board does not especially care for a particular elected officials and therefore, wants the power to hire or fire. I am not in this type of a position; however, I can speculate what could happen under the circumstances. I believe the public at-large should have the right to make that decision at the polls. Being an elected official, I am beholding to the people who elect me and not the people who may appoint me. I thoroughly understand that the legislation provides that it would need to be approved by county referendum but my experience tells me it should remain elected. I was appointed to fill a vacancy and then elected; however, I was well-known by many members of the county board. It could have just as easily been that even though I was well-qualified, someone else or another county board member could have been appointed to the position.

AB-47. I do not believe ticket splitting should be permitted at a primary. Unless you want to do away with the party system, there is no good reason for people to be able to nominate candidates for the general election, unless it is for the party they are committed. As you well know a weaker candidate could be supported in a primary election to be sure another party candidate can win in the general election and that is just not right! The primary election should be a nominating election.

Marilyn H. Merten
Washington County Clerk



Griffiths, Terri

From: Richard, Rob
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2003 10:41 AM
To: Griffiths, Terri
Subject: FW: AJR15

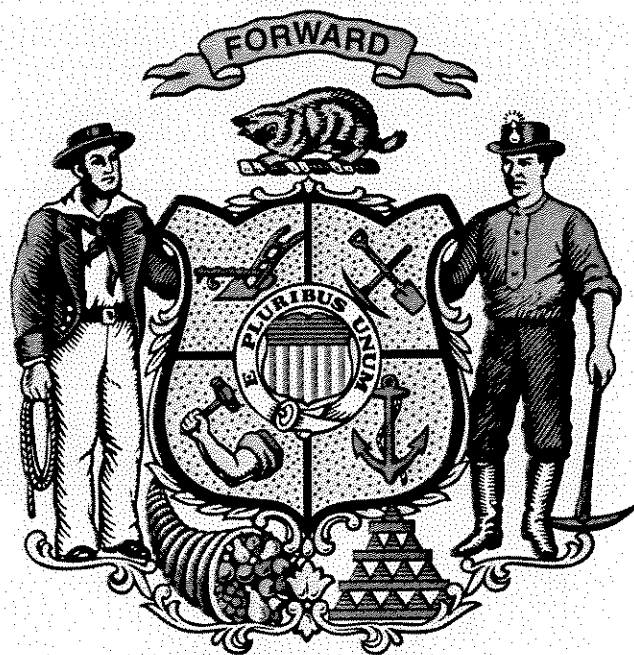
-----Original Message-----

From: KAY O'CONNELL [mailto:KAYO@co.rock.wi.us]
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2003 10:40 AM
To: rep.freese@legis.state.wi.us
Cc: rep.gundrum@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: AJR15

Campaign and Elections Committee
Rep. Freese, Chair and Rep. Gundrum, Vice Chair

The Wisconsin County Clerk's Association is on record as opposing appointment of constitutional officers. If this bill is passed the elector will have no say about whether or not their constitutional officer is elected or appointed and if counties go to appointed without the right of a state referendum, then we are back to the "Good Ole Boys syndrome" again and there will be no one to answer to the concerns of the public because they will not be elected. We answer every day to the public.

Kay O'Connell
Rock County Clerk
WCCA President



COUNTY TREASURER'S OFFICE

BROWN COUNTY

305 EAST WALNUT

P.O. BOX 23600

GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN 54305-3600

PHONE (920) 448-4074 FAX (920) 448-6341

KERRY M. BLANEY

COUNTY TREASURER

April 2, 2003

Representative Stephen J. Freese

RE: AJR 15

Dear Representative Freese:

I am responding to the AJR-15 bill, which proposes to change the Wisconsin Constitution to give Counties the option to appoint the current County Constitutional Officers.

I oppose such change that is recommended by the bill. There are various reasons that I oppose the bill. Most importantly the citizens of this State would lose the autonomy and independence in the operation of these county offices. The voters would no longer have the right to choose representatives who they wish to manage these County offices. Appointed positions would no longer be answerable directly to the public. More power would be vested to the County Executive, Administration, or Board Chairman who will have the authority to appoint individual to these positions.

We as Constitutional Officers are sensitive to the public needs. We take pride in the operation and services of our offices. We are cognizant that if the public is not satisfied with the services they receive they have the option to replace us. Under the proposed legislation the public wouldn't have much recourse if they were mistreated by some bureaucrat. Also, the position could be filled by political appointments that may not be qualified to handle the job.

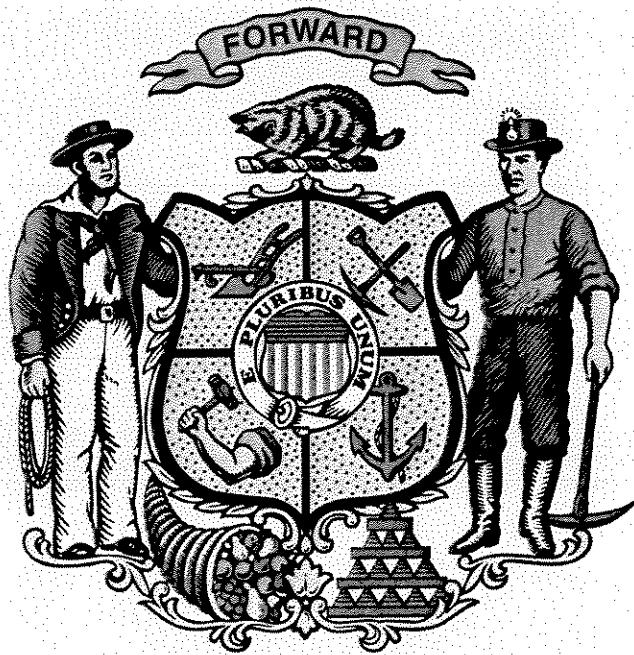
In addition by having constitutional officers on the ballot, it helps get the vote out for other political candidates like yourselves. It promotes political grassroots activities for the political parties.

Thank you for allowing me to share my concerns about AJR-15. If you have any further questions or comments, please call me at 920-448-6321 or e-mail at: blaney_km@co.brown.wi.us

Sincerely,

Kerry M. Blaney

BROWN COUNTY TREASURER



Griffiths, Terri

From: Richard, Rob
Sent: Thursday, April 03, 2003 11:22 AM
To: Griffiths, Terri
Subject: FW: AJR-15



2003 April 3.doc

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

From: Marilyn Mueller [mailto:Muellerm@kewauneeeco.org]
Sent: Thursday, April 03, 2003 11:17 AM
To: rep.freese@legis.state.wi.us; rep.grothman@legis.state.wi.us;
rep.gundrum@legis.state.wi.us; rep.pocan@legis.state.wi.us;
rep.travis@legis.state.wi.us; rep.woodj@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: AJR-15

Good Morning Gentlemen:

I intended to attend the hearing this afternoon regarding AJR-15 and register in opposition; however, with the nasty weather we are experiencing, I decided not to drive down to Madison. Attached is a memo expressing my feelings.

Thank you for your consideration.

Marilyn G. Mueller
Register of Deeds
Land Information Office
Kewaunee County Courthouse
613 Dodge Street
Kewaunee, WI 54216
920-388-7126
muellerm@kewauneeeco.org

April 3, 2003

TO: Committee on Campaigns and Elections
Representative Stephen J. Freese, Chairperson,
Representative Mark Gundrum, Vice Chairperson
Representative Glenn Grothman
Representative Mark Pocan
Representative David M. Travis
Representative Jeffrey Wood

FROM: Marilyn G. Mueller
Kewaunee County Register of Deeds

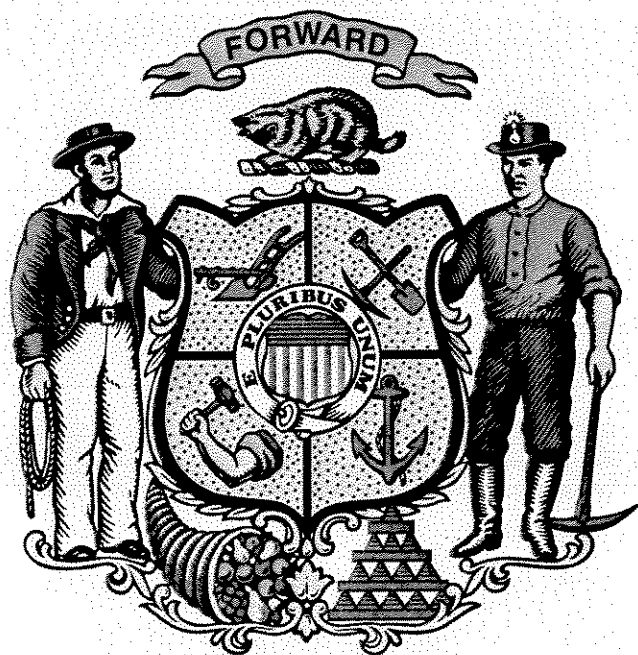
RE: AJR-15

As a Register of Deeds and a representative of Wisconsin Association of County Officers (WACO), I am not in favor of the proposed change to the Constitution that would allow counties the option to appoint positions that are now elected.

As elected officials, we answer to the public, not just a County Administrator, Executive or Board Chairman. Appointments by one county leader would remove the public's right to choose part of their government.

Public service is an essential element for countywide elected offices. Voters deserve the right to choose who will provide the best service. The election process works. Those who do not serve the public effectively do not get re-elected.

Thank you for allowing me to express my concerns about AJR-15.



Griffiths, Terri

From: Richard, Rob
Sent: Thursday, April 03, 2003 11:22
To: Griffiths, Terri
Subject: FW: AJR 15

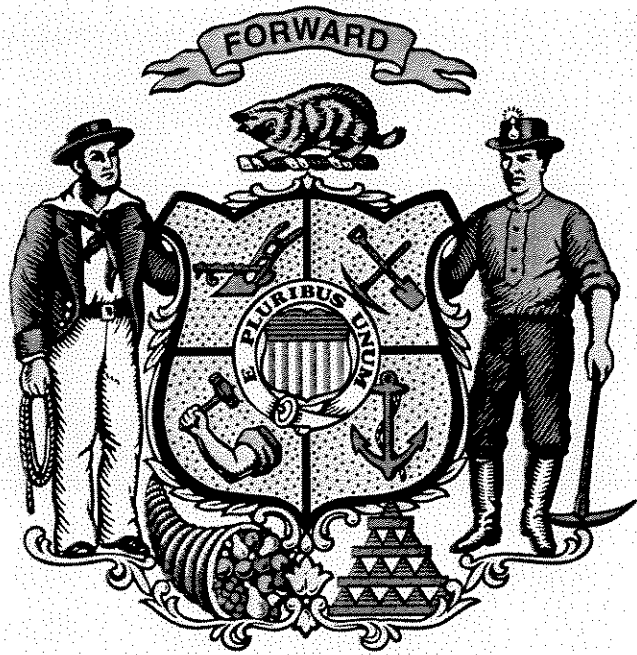
-----Original Message-----

From: Mary A Kropp [mailto:makropp@co.taylor.wi.us]
Sent: Thursday, April 03, 2003 11:16 AM
To: Rep.freese@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: AJR 15

Dear Rep. Freese:

I am in opposition to appointment of elected county officials. Appointments revert to the "good ol' boy" sytem. It won't matter what you know, it will be who you know. Our county is based on democracy, and elections are essential to our democracy.

Mary Ann Kropp
Taylor County Treasurer





BOB ZIEGELBAUER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • TWENTY FIFTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Committee on Campaigns & Elections

Representative Stephen Freese, Chair

Thursday, April 3, 2003

1:00 p.m. – 300-NE

Support for AJR 15

Mr. Chairman and Members:

Thank you for scheduling this hearing on AJR 15 and for your consideration of it.

AJR 15 proposes, on first consideration, a change to the State Constitution which would allow Wisconsin counties the *option* of converting any of the currently constitutionally required elective offices to appointed positions.

As you know, all Wisconsin counties are now required to *elect* a number of courthouse officials who have mostly administrative responsibilities. (Registers of Deeds, County Clerks, Clerks of Court, Treasurers, Sheriffs and District Attorneys)

AJR 15 would give counties a process to pursue the option of appointing these officials and reorganizing their functions. The option could only be implemented in a two-step process; first, by resolution of the County Board, and followed by ratification by the electorate in a countywide referendum.

ARJ 15 is about accountability and innovation!

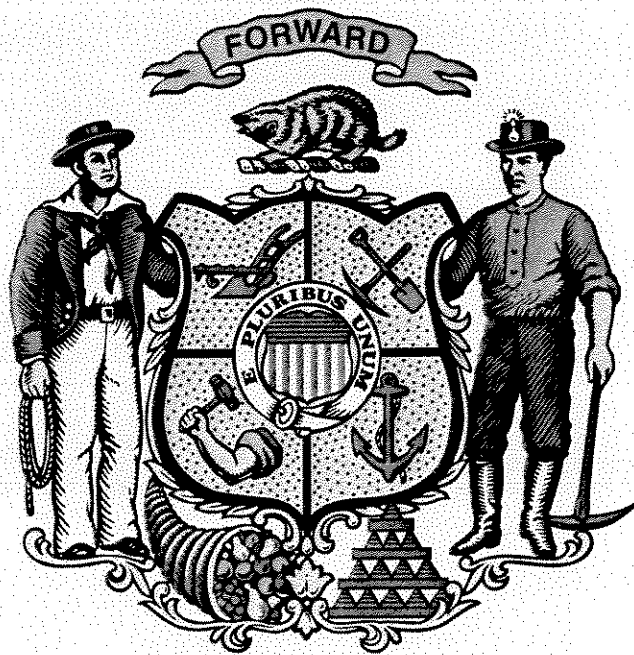
Ideally, Legislative policy flows directly from the electorate through the County Board while administrative/operational responsibilities flow directly from the executive elected by the people or the administrator chosen by the County Board. The current requirement for electing administrative positions confuses accountability and acts as a barrier to innovation and reorganization. AJR 15 would give counties an option that could lead to streamlining and modernizing administrative functions.

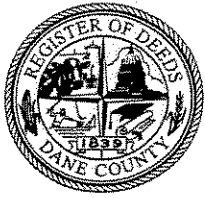
(This was a recommendation of the "Wisconsin Blue-Ribbon Commission on State-Local Partnerships for the 21st Century Report", January 2001, also known as the Kettl Commission.)

Thank you again for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

###

STATE CAPITOL: P.O. BOX 8953, MADISON, WI 53708-8953 • (608) 266-0315
TOLL FREE: 1-888-529-0025 • FAX (608)-266-0316 or (608) 282-3625 • E-MAIL: bob.ziegelbauer@legis.state.wi.us
DISTRICT: 1213 S. 8TH STREET, P.O. BOX 325, MANITOWOC, WI 54221-0325
MANITOWOC OFFICE: (920) 684-6783 • HOME: (920) 684-4362





Dane County Register of Deeds

JANE LICHT

CHIEF DEPUTY
Darlene Duckert

210 M L King Jr Blvd, Room 110
P O Box 1438, Madison WI 53701-1438 (608)266-4141
www.co.dane.wi.us/regdeeds/rdhome.htm licht@co.dane.wi.us

April 3, 2003

Re: AJR-15 –Appointment of Elected County Courthouse Officials

Dear Representatives Freese, Gundrum, Grothman, Wood, Travis and Pocan:

My name is Jane Licht and I am the Dane County Register of Deeds. I know that my face is very familiar to most of you. That is because I serve on the Wisconsin Register of Deeds Association Legislative Committee and we promote legislative to assist us in serving our customers. We also take positions on the legislation being promoted by others that affect our offices.

Some of you have co-sponsored our legislation – such as:

1. Establishing the Termination of Decedent's Property Interest in 867.045 and 046. This is the very helpful method of informal probate that can be used when one spouse dies.
2. Establishing the standard format for legal documents – which has greatly helped record keeping both for us and our customers – and which is being replicated in other states.
3. A revision of Chapter 59.43, the register of deeds duties and requirements, to advance those provisions from the time of Thomas Jefferson into the modern age.
4. A revision of Chapter 703, Condominiums, to clear up ambiguities and give better direction to those preparing and recording condominium instruments. In fact, I recently served on my second Condominium Committee, which has now resulted in legislation.

Another register, Mark Ladd and I recently served on your Open Records Law Review Committee, and we have pledged to work with Rep. Gundrum and Senator Erpenbach on other privacy issues related to recorded documents.

Once again, this year we have a list of legislation that we are working on with various Legislators. There is the UCC trailer bill, and the cut-off time for recorded documents – both very good bills that ran out of time during the last session. We are also looking at policy related to electronic recordings and electronic signatures as well as other privacy, security and disaster recovery issues.

And we are working hard to preserve the Wisconsin Land Information Program – which has helped tremendously to modernize our county offices and make us more efficient and effective in serving the public despite diminishing resources.

In short – we ARE politicians – we help shape policy. In most cases, we work cooperatively with the County Board and the County Executive or Administrator. In some cases, we appreciate having a measure of autonomy so that we are free to speak frankly with both groups. While other department heads may be ordered to frame their comments in a certain manner, we can speak openly and honestly since we are directly responsible to our county citizens.

Our constituents are not clamoring to make us appointed. We are already at the bottom of the department head pay scale, so this provision will not save money. And I know from experience, that it is much easier to get rid of an incompetent elected official than an appointed department head.

Then who is behind this legislation? It appears to be other elected officials who want more power and control for themselves. They have confidence in the electorate's choices when it comes to their offices but apparently not for ours.

I would have to admit that there is no compelling reason for us to be elected in a partisan manner. But every time the issue comes up, you folks seem to want us there to help get out the vote. So I am not so sure this is a cause worth pursuing.

But I do feel these positions should remain elected. We are stewards of the people's most important legal documents – birth, death, marriage, military discharge, mortgages, deeds, land contracts, on and on. These are not state government's records and they are not the county executive's records and they are not county board chairman's records. These important documents belong to the citizens of my county.

I, for one, have faith and confidence in the electorate. If the elected official is not serving them well – they will elect someone else.

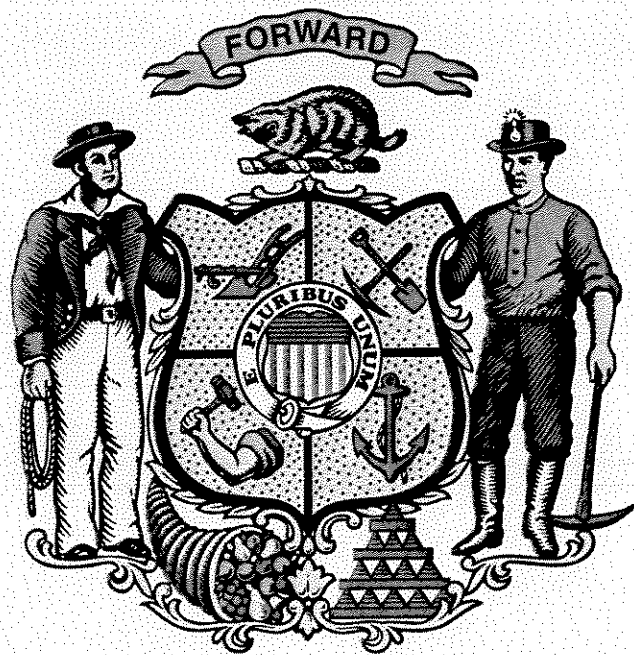
In my county, only the legislative lobbyist can testify at hearings – not department heads. Those of us who are county courthouse officials are the only exception. Our county lobbyist is too busy with the big-ticket items to devote time to land records modernization – which is a cause I have championed for the last 14 years. I ask you, please, don't silence our voices.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Licht". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jane Licht



called 715-748-1466

Register
against X
Mary Ann Kropp
2241 S. 2nd St.
Medford, WI 54451
X oppose ATR 15 -

Taylor County Treasurer.

makropp@co.taylor.wi.us