

## 2005-06 SESSION

### COMMITTEE HEARING RECORDS

#### Assembly Committee on Campaigns & Elections (AC-CE)

Sample:

#### Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

- 05hrAC-EdR\_RCP\_pt01a
- 05hrAC-EdR\_RCP\_pt01b
- 05hrAC-EdR\_RCP\_pt02

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤ \*\*

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

➤ \*\*

➤ Committee Hearings ... CH

➤ \*\*

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ \*\*

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

➤ \*\*

➤ Hearing Records ... HR

➤ \*\*

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ **05hr\_AC-CE\_Misc\_pt10**

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ \*\*

# SUE JESKEWITZ

State Representative • 24th Assembly District

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December 9, 2005

Representative Stephen J. Freese  
Committee on Campaigns and Elections, Chair  
Wisconsin State Capital, Room 115W  
HAND-DELIVERED

Dear Representative Freese:

As you know, voting is one of the single most important responsibilities that we have as U.S. citizens and as an elected official, I cannot think of anything more important than ensuring the integrity of our elections. For this reason I am respectfully requesting that you hold a public hearing on a bill I co-authored, Assembly Bill 782.

AB 782 was introduced and referred to the Committee on Campaigns and Elections on October 20, 2005. I recognize that eliminating same day voter registration may not be a popular stance to take. However, I do believe it is one way Wisconsin can improve the accuracy of our elections and since Wisconsin is only one of six states that allow same day registration I feel the public should have the opportunity to weigh in on this subject at a public hearing.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Sue Jeskewitz  
State Representative  
24<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



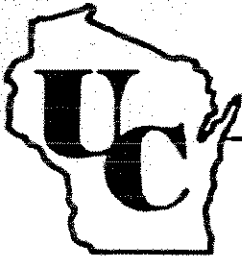
# SUE JESKEWITZ

State Representative • 24th Assembly District

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**Assembly Bill 782**  
**Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections**  
**January 25, 2006**  
**Talking Points**

- Wisconsin is only one of six states that allow same day voter registration;
- Same day registration creates additional challenges to ensuring the accuracy of the electorate;
- In the November 2004 election 20.3 percent of all voters registered at the polls on election day;
- In the November 2000 election, 22.6 percent of the electorate registered at the polls;
- Eliminating same day registration does not take away anybody's rights or disenfranchise anyone;
- Per federal law, doing so would automatically require Wisconsin to make voter registration accessible in other government locations such as at the Department of Motor Vehicles, County and other offices handling public benefits and services to the disabled and I armed forces recruitment offices



# United Council

of University of Wisconsin Students, Inc.

14 W. Mifflin Street, Suite 212, Madison, WI 53703-2568 Phone (608) 263-3422 Fax (608) 265-4070

Testimony on AB 782  
Committee on Campaigns and Elections, Assembly  
By Brian Tanner  
Legislative Affairs Director, United Council of UW Students  
January 25, 2006

Chairman Freese and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address an alarming piece of legislation. As the Legislative Affairs Director for the United Council of UW Students, I am here representing over 140,000 students on 24 University of Wisconsin campuses across our state. There are three points I encourage you to consider as students urge you to vote against AB 782 which would eliminate Election Day voter registration.

One, students are a highly transient population. In many ways they are forced to live a nomadic lifestyle. I offer the following anecdotal evidence which some of you may be able to relate to. Over 36,000 students live in residence halls across the state. Tens of thousands of other students live in off-campus housing, in most cases as renters. Each and every year students pack up their worldly possessions, sometimes all of which may fit into a car, and move into their residence hall rooms or apartments usually the weekend before the start of classes and move out after spring exams. You may have participated in this ritual either as a student or a parent. This ritual is not by their choice but mandated by UW policy and renter contracts.

Two, being a part of the electoral process is a retention tool for our communities. It is a vital retention tool. We need more college degree holders in our communities to attract high-wage jobs and to build a sustainable tax base. Voting is one of the easiest means to invest students in the community. It gives them a stake in community interests. What are we saying to students by erecting additional voting barriers, "Visit, but don't stay?"

Last, voting is a fundamental democratic right. Our state should be reducing barriers, not creating more, for citizens to participate in our democracy. Our elected officials did exactly this in establishing Election Day registration for residents here in 1976. Wisconsin is one of six states that offer same-day voter registration and we should be proud of this. We should be proud that our youngest voting citizens, those 18 to 24 years old, had the second highest voter turnout in the country at 63 percent (Center on Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement-CIRCLE). Studies have shown young citizens vote 14 percent higher in states with Election Day registration during Presidential election years and 4 percent higher in mid-term elections.

Studies have also shown that voting is a "learn behavior." Once someone votes for the first time, the more likely they are to vote again. The threshold is essentially one. However, as one gets older and has not voted, they are less and less likely to vote.



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Students are the future leaders of our state, possibly our nation. We should make every effort to engage them in the electoral process at every opportunity. Evidence clearly shows that Election Day registration engages students. Students urge you to vote against AB 782.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



## **WISCONSIN COALITION FOR ADVOCACY**

THE PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY SYSTEM FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

January 25, 2006

To: Representative Freese, chairperson, and members of the Committee on Campaigns and Elections

From: Alicia Sidman, Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy

Subject: **Assembly Bill 782**

The Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy is the Protection and Advocacy agency for the state of Wisconsin. Our mandate is to protect the rights of people with disabilities in Wisconsin.

We have serious concerns that AB 782 will discourage people with disabilities and other eligible voters from participating in the electoral process.

People in Wisconsin appreciate the ability to register to vote on election day. This is demonstrated by the fact that approximately 20 percent of voters utilized this option during the November 2004 presidential elections. It is also true that last November Wisconsin had one of the highest voter turn outs in the country. We should be proud.

Given its popularity, it is no surprise that people with disabilities utilize same day registration as well. As the voting rights coordinator for our agency, I make myself available to answer questions for people with disabilities on voting laws. I received many calls from eligible voters with disabilities on election day last November who wanted to know if they could vote even though they had never voted before and were not registered. Wisconsin's same day registration election law permitted these eligible voters to register and cast a ballot.

Repealing same day registration would discourage eligible voters from voting. As it is, voters with disabilities face barriers that make it more difficult for them to cast a ballot than for others. These barriers can include not being able to cast a private and independent ballot, not being able to enter their polling site because the building is not accessible, being turned away from the polls because they do not "appear" to be eligible to vote, and lack of accessible transportation to the polls. The effects of these barriers are reflected in the statistics; individuals with disabilities vote at a rate of 15 percent below the general population.

Barriers to voting affect all voters, but barriers disproportionately impact voters with disabilities.

AB 782 would increase the number of provisional ballots cast in Wisconsin. Proving one's provisional ballot should count is significantly more difficult for people with disabilities compared to the general population. This is because people with disabilities must often rely on special transportation that requires at least 24-hour notice to ride. A voter who casts a provisional ballot is required to prove they are eligible to cast a ballot by 4:00 PM the day after the election. Because of the time requirement to secure a ride, it would be impossible for some voters with disabilities to provide proof to the municipal clerk by the next day.

Currently our same day registration law exempts Wisconsin from the National Voter Registration Act (aka the motor voter law). Because AB 782 eliminates same day registration, Wisconsin law will need to change to comply with the motor voter law. This law requires public assistance offices and agencies that serve people with disabilities and who are primarily funded by the state to register people to vote. This will help some people with disabilities to register to vote. However, there are many eligible voters with disabilities who are not connected to these agencies and who could be adversely affected by the elimination of same day registration. Therefore, the damage that would be caused AB 782 is not outweighed by any benefit of compliance with the National Voter Registration Act.

Furthermore, Wisconsin does not need to eliminate same day registration in order to pass a law to require social service agencies and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to register people to vote. Proactive state legislation could mandate agencies to register people to vote without eliminating same day registration.

The majority of county and municipal clerks I have spoken to feel that the most of problems they experienced last November happened because proper procedures were not followed and there was lack of administrative planning for the high voter turnout. In part, there were not enough poll workers who were properly trained to deal with the high voter turnout. Numerous administrative errors were made, and there was not enough people power to process all of the mail-in registration forms. The clerks believe these problems, and not rampant fraud, were the reasons for election day problems.

There are plans in place that will help clerks to manage voter registration and that are designed to limit fraud. HAVA requires that the state implement a voter registration database; is due to be up and running in the next few months. Municipal clerks have been working on streamlining and enforcing their election day policies and procedures so they are prepared for record voter turnouts. Also, legislation has been introduced that will solve these problems without placing the burden of responsibility on the voter.

AB 782 will make it more difficult for people with disabilities to vote and will have the consequence of disenfranchising the disability community and others from the electoral process. We do not support AB 782, and believe that alternative solutions should be pursued that do not discourage people from voting.

January 25, 2006

Rep. Stephen Freese, Chairperson  
Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections  
Wisconsin Legislature,  
State Capitol, Madison, WI

RE: Comments on Assembly Bill 782

Representative Freese:

My name is Bill Adamski and I am speaking as a representative of Fair Elections Wisconsin, which is a citizens' group dedicated to helping ensure that elections in the State are conducted in a fully transparent, democratic manner that encourages all eligible voters to exercise their most important civic right.

Assembly Bill 782 contains several provisions relating to changing voter registration processes. Fair Elections Wisconsin rejects the principle section of this bill which would discard election day registration and essentially close all voter registration within 14 days prior to an election.

Consequently, Fair Elections Wisconsin rejects AB 782 and recommends that the Committee on Campaigns and Elections should vote to defeat it from going to the full Assembly.

Fair Elections Wisconsin supports the current practice of allowing people to register to vote on election day by providing irrefutable proof of residency for 10 days at that person's current address. This voter registration feature has proven to be a reliable method to encourage people to vote on election day when they have not registered beforehand.

Voting is such an important civic right that people should not be deemed ineligible to vote if they have not registered to vote prior to election day. Furthermore, there has been only anecdotal stories of people abusing this process.

Fair Elections Wisconsin believes that with more – and better trained -- poll workers, election day registration will continue to be one method to help make voting available to a larger fraction of the eligible population. Assembly bill 542, which Fair Elections Wisconsin also endorses, would provide resources and funding to ensure that there are more and better trained workers at the polls on election day.

Fair Elections Wisconsin does support one narrow portion of AB 782. That is the enactment of voter registration features contained in the National Voter Registration Act (also referred to as the "Motor Voter" law). These provisions essentially allow people to register to vote at many Wisconsin State government offices throughout the year when doing other state business.

Fair Elections Wisconsin recommends that the National Voter Registration Act language be separated out of a defeated AB 782 and introduced as separate legislation.

Sincerely,



Bill Adamski  
(for Fair Elections Wisconsin)  
1610 Rutledge St.  
Madison, WI 53704