

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_pt22**

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ **

Griffiths, Terri

From: Richard, Rob
Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2005 9:23 AM
To: Griffiths, Terri
Subject: FW: Statement in Support of AB 542, SB 249

Attachments: Assembly Bill 542 and Senate Bill 249 Support.doc



Assembly Bill 542
and Senate B...

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

From: Michele Sumara [mailto:msumara@hqeplaw.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2005 9:12 AM
To: Rep.Freese
Cc: Barbara Zack Quindel
Subject: Statement in Support of AB 542, SB 249

Rep. Freese,
Please find attached the statement in support of AB 542 and SB 249, of Barbara Zack Quindel, legal coordinator, Milwaukee Election Protection 2004.

We would greatly appreciate it if you would register Ms. Quindel's support of AB 542 and submit her attached statement to the record of today's public hearing, which we are unable to attend.

Thank you,
Michele Sumara

B. Michele Sumara
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To: Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

Date: September 1, 2005

I write to support Assembly Bill 542 and Senate Bill 249.

I served as legal coordinator of the 2004 Milwaukee Election Protection coalition. On November 2, 2004, 500 community volunteers, 90 law students and 118 attorneys working with the non-partisan Election Protection coalition observed voting in 92 Milwaukee polling places. In January, 2005, the Legal Committee of Milwaukee's Election Protection released ***2004 Presidential Election Review: Report from Non-Partisan Observers of Voting in the General Election in the City Of Milwaukee on November 2, 2004.***

Our Report highlighted a number of significant administrative problems with the November 2d election in Milwaukee. What the hundreds of Election Protection observers did **not** observe was voter fraud. Rather, the problems we saw on Election Day - such as long lines, inaccessible sites, registration difficulties, and confusing instructions - were ones that tended to impede eligible voters' access to the polls.

Our ***2004 Presidential Election Review*** recommended an increase in elections staff both prior to major elections and on election day, improved poll worker training and communications, better polling place conditions, and provision of multilingual materials for non-English speaking citizens. The report also identified problems with absentee balloting, noting concern over the rate of rejection of absentee ballots resulting in voters not having their ballots counted.

Information from investigations conducted subsequent to our report have also found a need to strengthen and improve the administration of our elections. Adequately staffed polling places has emerged as a paramount concern of all who have studied the issue. This means not only increasing the number of poll workers, but also ensuring better training and operational planning so that all of the crucial tasks, including recordkeeping, are properly performed while reducing the waiting time for voters. To ensure that communities provide adequate staffing, we strongly support requiring a planning process, tailored to the anticipated needs of particular communities.

Assembly Bill 542 and Senate Bill 249 contain provisions for mandatory training, additional poll workers, and election day plans that specifically address these needs. We fully support these measures as responsive to the problems that we observed.

These bills also contain other provisions that correspond to recommendations in our report, including measures that would prevent ineligible felons from voting. We did not observe fraud in the November, 2004, election but did recommend strengthening and improving existing procedures that would deter individuals from committing election law violations. Including an affirmation on the registration form that an individual registering has not been convicted or is not currently on probation, parole, or extended supervision spells out the terms of the law in a manner far superior to the current form that simply affirms one's eligibility to vote. Poll list notations will also enable poll workers to determine on the spot whether a voter is ineligible due to a felony-related exclusion.

AB 542 and SB 249 contain proposals that would improve the casting and counting of absentee ballots. We support provisions that would allow for satellite locations to accommodate additional voters who wish to vote by absentee ballot. In addition, those bills provide for centralized absentee ballot counting. This is an extremely important reform that would allow absentee ballots to be handled by a separate group of election workers who could be specially trained in the laws governing absentee balloting. Our observers noted that poll workers were frequently overwhelmed by the task of processing absentee ballots during the course of their other duties on election day and were not fully trained in many of the details associated with the handling of these ballots. Separate handling of these ballots will improve the process and provide greater assurance that all eligible voters casting absentee ballots have their ballots counted and that there is an accurate record of these votes.

AB 542 and SB 249 present a comprehensive package of election reform that will improve election administration while maintaining Wisconsin's fair and open election procedures. This ensures that we can continue to maximize electoral participation and protect every citizen's right to vote.

Thank you.

Barbara Zack Quindel
Legal Coordinator
Milwaukee Election Protection 2004



www.seiuwi.org

For immediate release
Friday, September 2, 2005

Contact: Robert Kraig
(414) 322-5324

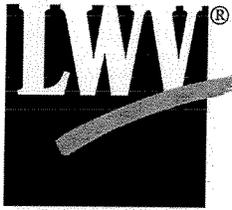
AB 542 Addresses Real Problems in Wisconsin Election System

Representative Cullen's Bill Protects the Right to Vote

Milwaukee - Wisconsin has a proud history of high voter turnout in elections. Unfortunately, last November too many Wisconsin voters were confronted with an election system that was woefully unable to handle the high number of voters. Instead of celebrating this eruption of democracy in Wisconsin, Legislative Republicans have repeatedly attempted to pass legislation that would turn Wisconsin's election system from one of the most open in the country to one of the most exclusionary.

Following Governor Doyle's lead, Representative David Cullen has introduced legislation (AB 542) that directly addresses the real problems in the state's election system. Representative Cullen's legislation will work to strengthen this system by dealing with problems that result from such high voter participation. AB 542 will directly address critical problems including more and better trained poll workers and early voting opportunities to reduce lines on Election Day.

"Wisconsin citizens are rightly proud of our high voter participation in Wisconsin," stated Dian Palmer, President of SEIU Wisconsin State Council. "We need an election system that can efficiently deal with everyone who wants to vote," continued Palmer. "AB 542 will help protect every voter's rights and ensure Wisconsin continues to lead the nation in voter participation."



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN

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September 1, 2005

TO: Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

RE: Statement about Assembly Bill 542

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin supports AB 542, which is designed to improve the election process. Based on our long-standing principle that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote, we support those measures included in this legislation that improve accessibility and ease of voting for all eligible citizens. We particularly appreciate the section of the bill that protects absentee voting.

The League's support of free and fair elections goes back to our founding in 1920. We supported the 1977-78 legislature's enactment of major election law reform, including the establishment of registration at the polls and the definition of identification needs for registration. We are proud of our state's successful election procedures, and we will continue to fight to protect citizens' rights to participate in government and to oppose major threats to our basic constitutional rights, including the right to vote.

The League has opposed the efforts of several legislative sessions to require all citizens to show a government-issued photo identification card in order to vote. The League of Women Voters believes a photo ID card would do little to prevent fraudulent voting, and it would place an unfair burden on certain groups of people – including the elderly, low-income, minority, homeless, or handicapped – for whom it is most inconvenient to take off work, get transportation, stand in line, and apply for the documentation. Given that most of the discrepancies that have been identified in the 2004 election were found to be the result of innocent mistakes made on a busy day, we support efforts to address the administrative issues surrounding elections.

AB 542 addresses the issue of how to identify individuals who are not eligible to vote. For example, it would require the names of persons who have been convicted of a felony, and whose voting rights have not been restored, to be listed on the statewide voter registration list with a notation that they are not eligible to vote.

To improve our election process, the League has long believed we should focus on positive reform measures, rather than enact legislation that inhibits voting and places an unfair burden on certain groups of voters. We do not have positions on many specific measures included in AB 542, for example on how poll workers are appointed or trained and on how municipal clerks should supervise elections and count votes. We do recommend one change to the proposed legislation, and that is that we believe all absentee ballots should be counted on Election Day. It is too much to hope for to expect that preliminary results of absentee voting will be kept from the public. We heartily support measures in this legislation to put more poll workers at the polls on Election Day and provide better training for poll workers and election officials.

LENA C. TAYLOR
Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

Testimony of State Senator Lena Taylor on Assembly Bill 542
Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections
September 1, 2005

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 542, which represents the governor's complete election reform package. I would like to thank Chairman Freese and the members of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections for holding a public hearing on this comprehensive reform plan.

As we all know, Milwaukee was one of many municipalities in Wisconsin that experienced election problems in 2004. Most of these problems have been identified by investigators as mainly bureaucratic mistakes... human error, not voter fraud.

Recently, Milwaukee was the site of an embarrassing press conference at which 9 individuals were accused of voter fraud. A quick investigation found those charges to be false. I prefer to give those overzealous accusers the benefit of the doubt and call their serious lapse in judgment human error, rather than fraud.

The last time I appeared before this committee, it was to testify in opposition to a photo ID bill. That bill was a solution in search of a problem.

We know that there have been problems administering elections in Milwaukee and other places. We also know that a photo ID requirement would not have prevented those problems. 12 felons have been charged with illegally voting in 2004. But a photo ID would not have stopped them because they weren't trying to hide their identity. Each of them voted using their own names.

That is just one example of why I am truly grateful to Chairman Freese for holding this hearing today on a bill that we believe contains real solutions to real problems. AB 542 is a comprehensive election reform proposal that will restore integrity to the electoral process. It is also far superior to a narrow photo ID restriction that would discourage public participation in elections.

When it comes to administering a massive one-day election, we know the problems...

- Long lines that discourage voters
- Overburdened and unprepared poll-workers
- Untrained election officials and sloppy record-keeping procedures
- Lack of a uniform list of ineligible voters

HERE TO SERVE YOU!

Here are the solutions...

- Election Day plans in every municipality that guarantee no voter has to wait in line more than 30 minutes
- Recruitment of more poll-workers & better preparation to handle high-turnout election days
- Mandatory training for all election officials & poll-workers, and uniform voter registration cards
- A master list of ineligible voters to prevent felons from voting

This is a comprehensive package of election reforms, many of which are already working well in other states. Unlike the divisive photo ID restriction, this bill can achieve three important goals that we all share. This bill will...

- Improve access with better-managed polling places and shorter lines
- Increase accuracy of results by reducing human error
- Restore integrity of the system by eliminating voter fraud

Thank you again Chairman Freese and members of the committee for this opportunity to testify.

I hope we can work together to advance this much-needed reform, and avoid any further embarrassing and unfounded accusations.

I personally would not want to be part of a press conference slinging fraud charges at the clerk in the Town of Herman (population 741) just because an honest error gave President Bush 100 extra votes.

Reforming our election system can be done -- and must be done -- without concern for partisan advantage. It is a fundamental function of a democratic government to ensure that each eligible citizen has equal and unimpeded access to the ballot box, and that every vote is properly recorded.

I believe this is an honest attempt to protect our citizens' Constitutional right to vote, and I hope you will join me in supporting this bill. Thank you.



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
ADMINISTRATION**

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**Prepared Statement to Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections
Secretary Marc Marotta
September 1, 2005**

Good afternoon Rep. Freese and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of Assembly Bill 542. Governor Doyle and legislative leaders introduced this set of election reforms earlier this year to address problems brought to light by the November 2004 election.

As you know, Wisconsin had a record turnout in last November's election. One of the most overlooked stories of the last election is that in Wisconsin almost 3 million people voted – ranking our state third in the nation in voter turnout, with more than 75 percent. As a state, we should be proud of this fact and work to encourage the remainder of Wisconsin's voting population to get to the polls.

Unfortunately, the surge in voters in November strained our overwhelmed, outdated and under-resourced election system, creating long lines and disorganization on Election Day in some areas.

Fraud cannot be tolerated, period. But make no mistake: the vast majority of alleged cases of fraud have turned out to be clerical or administrative errors by the bureaucracy.

We need to fix these bureaucratic problems, but we should never let a bureaucratic mistake take away someone's right to vote.

With this in mind, Governor Doyle proposed a comprehensive package of statewide election reforms. It will provide more and better trained poll workers, require post-election reviews to verify election results, impose tough restrictions against illegal votes by felons, and ban the practice of paying a bounty for voter registrations. It will make it easier for eligible citizens to vote, but harder to cheat.

The state will take a major step toward reform in the next few months, with the development of a single, statewide, computerized and accurate list of who can vote and who can't. Under the Help America Vote Act the state is required to create a statewide computerized voter registration list by January 1, 2006, allowing coordination with other state agency databases, such as the felons database at the Department of Corrections, to verify accuracy and eligibility.

The system will go a long way to keep track of voters and help prevent fraud, but there is much more that we can do to ensure our elections are effective, efficient, and honest.

First, we can avoid some of the Election Day pressures – and subsequent mistakes – by being better prepared. In 2004, at many polling locations, voters waited for hours – and some gave up altogether. Assembly Bill 542 will require municipalities to develop Election Day plans that have a goal of a 30-minute maximum waiting time on Election Day.

To ease the burden on Election Day, the governor proposed that Wisconsin join the 23 other states that allow for early voting. This proposal will allow municipalities to establish satellite absentee ballot voting locations at places such as community centers, libraries, grocery stores, senior centers and shopping malls. The bill also will allow municipalities to get a head start on counting ballots, including absentees, but no election results will be released until after the polls close.

Governor Doyle's proposal also includes a provision that will make it easier for eligible voters to register by allowing people to register to vote when applying for or renewing a driver's license at the DMV. This has the potential to increase turnout, and it also will help ease the work that municipalities do to register voters in the weeks leading up to the election and on Election Day.

Under Assembly Bill 542, all poll workers and special registration deputies will undergo training. And we will provide counties with consistent, easily accessible training courses by video and the Internet.

One of the biggest problems in 2004 was that we just had too few people working at the polls. Assembly Bill 542 requires municipalities to appoint an additional poll worker at each polling site to ensure orderly and efficient flow of voters. This person will make sure voters are at the right polling place and in the right line. Also, the bill requires municipalities to have a pool of trained, on-call reserve poll workers to address last-minute staffing issues.

Currently, many voter registration drives pay on a per-voter or quota basis, providing a financial incentive for workers to forge signatures or register the same voter twice. Assembly Bill 542 prohibits paying workers on this basis to protect the quality of the information.

The bill also establishes uniformity in registration cards to prevent confusion on Election Day, and it requires all polling locations to display a map directing voters to their proper polling place.

Under the Governor's proposal, Wisconsin – for the first time – will have a uniform voter registration form. This will give election officials a more orderly collection of registration information and allow them to more quickly process registration forms.

Finally, we will include safeguards to stop ineligible felons from voting. We will alert poll workers to possible ineligibility and require same-day registrants to be cross-referenced against an updated Department of Corrections list after the election. Before being allowed to vote, same-day registrants will have to affirmatively certify on the registration form that they are not felons.

To help determine whether anyone voted improperly, Assembly Bill 542 allows access to voter birth date information. We'll put safeguards in place to protect privacy, but this information will help guarantee the integrity of our elections.

All of these measures will be implemented using funds from the federal Help America Vote Act. To date, Wisconsin has received about \$50 million under HAVA.

Assembly Bill 542 provides the common-sense reforms that Wisconsin needs to address an overwhelmed and under-resourced election system. But it does so without compromising the constitutional right to vote.

Thank you again for your time and your attention to Assembly Bill 542. The Doyle administration looks forward to working with committee members to move forward with responsible election reform. I am happy to take any questions at this time.

Spencer Coggs



State Senator

Mr. Chairman and Members,

Thank you for allowing me to come before you today to testify on Assembly Bill (AB) 542. I am the Senate author of the companion bill, Senate Bill 249, that has been recommended by Governor Jim Doyle. Since we've already heard about the technical aspects of the bill from Secretary Marotta as well as the Assembly author, Representative Cullen, I'd like to touch on the reasons that this bill is good public policy that is deserving of support by this committee as well as the legislature.

This bill has taken into account investigations by many different groups throughout the state concerned with election administration. We have made an effort to study the problem, identify specific areas of concern, and recommend some real, common sense solutions to the problems that have come to light in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections in Wisconsin.

What we have seen time and again from many different points of view is that the problems with elections in Wisconsin are not the result of some vast conspiracy to defraud elections in our state. What has become glaringly obvious in continued studies of these elections is that almost all issues are the result of bureaucratic breakdowns, often as a result of undertrained and overworked poll workers. My mantra is an will continue to be more workers, more training and more education. With recent investigations into voter fraud, 9 questionable voters have been identified from the 2004 presidential election in Milwaukee. Of those 9, US Attorney Steven Biskupic showed that each and every one was explainable through human error and were not part of an individual or coordinated fraud scheme. And these problems are not localized in Milwaukee, or even urban areas of the state. As we've heard, the Town of Herman in Shawano County mistakenly added 100 votes to George Bush's total that were not cast.

The goal of this legislation is not to assign blame, but to address these issues in future elections in Wisconsin. As the problems are grounded in human error, our bill seeks to eliminate potential for that error in the future. It is also important to note that NONE of these errors would have changed the outcome of the election. In 2004, John Kerry won Wisconsin with an 11,387 vote margin, and we have boiled irregularities down to less than a handful of potential cases in our state.

The focus of this legislation is to prevent the types of allegations and bureaucratic breakdowns that were made in Milwaukee from becoming the reality statewide. In

addition, the City of Milwaukee formed its own Elections Task Force to examine the systemic flaws revealed by the 2000 and 2004 elections. The result of that study was a list of legislative reforms the city requested I draft on their behalf. That legislation is supplemental and complimentary to AB 542. It will include reforms that will affect Milwaukee, the state's largest city, which has several unique election administration issues based on its population and size of the electorate. I have been working with the Senator Leibham and the Legislative Council Special Committee on Election Law Review, of which I know you are a member, Mr. Chair, to move this legislation forward.

I know that we can all recognize the importance of making some basic changes to protect the accessibility of voting for our citizens while preserving the credibility of election results in Wisconsin. We have a common goal to continue the fine tradition of participation by our electorate. We have the opportunity with this bill to balance that goal with the necessity of protecting our elections from as much human error as possible. I urge the committee to approve AB 542 so that this legislation can become law and can become implemented in time for the next round of statewide elections.

To: Committee on Campaigns and Elections
From: Paul Malischke, 4825 Bayfield Terrace, Madison 53705
September 1, 2005

Re: AB-542

There are many good things in AB-542. I have some suggestions to make it better.

The bill calls for municipalities to have a plan for their elections. This is good common sense. They should have a plan, they should put it in writing, and it should be submitted to their governing body and thereby made available to the public. The bill would mandate this and lists some items to be in the plan, but **it should be amended to include the following items:**

- Information on the number of ballots to be printed
- Description of the training program for pollworkers
- Allocation of pollworkers
- Distribution of voting equipment
- Date & place of testing the voting equipment
- Meeting the need for bilingual staffing at polling places
- Date & place of canvassing
- Emergency preparedness for election day

These are items that are critical to elections and should be published in the plan.

The bill also calls for a follow-up report analyzing the administration after the election. Elections need more follow-up and quality control efforts. But the bill does not say whom the report is submitted to. **Please amend the bill to require this follow-up report to go to the governing body of the municipality.**

There are two bad items in the bill.

On page 24, section 31, it calls for prescribing a specific format of registration forms by the SEB, including format, size, shape, and font.

You may remember about a year ago when the Ohio Secretary of State ordered the rejection of any registrations that were not on an exact type of paper. Under public pressure, eventually the order was rescinded, but not without confusion and bitterness. Wisconsin does not need this. Instead, the staff of the SEB should continue to make **recommendations** for a standard form. Let's make sure that they have enough funding and staff to carry out their job.

Another bad item is giving public access to birth dates of any registered voter, on page 28, section 37. There are malicious identity thieves who want to take financial advantage of information. Why give them a head start by giving out our birth dates? The safeguards mentioned in the bill are very weak. Under the new registration system, registrants will be crosschecked with state databases such as the DOT for consistency. We don't need to give out birth dates.

The bill also would move the counting of absentee ballots from the polling places to a central location. This may be an idea with merit, but the implementation in the bill is very poor. I urge you to go slowly on a major change such as this. See my previous letter to the Governor included as additional pages to this note.

The proposal to allow people to register to vote at the DMV has particular merit. This is a great place to get accurate information that is immediately verifiable, and the clerks at the DMV are experts at conducting these types of transactions. It will spread registrations throughout the year and avoid the crunch at election time. Those who choose not to register at the DMV may still register in all the existing ways.

I hope you will consider amending this bill to make it better, and then give a positive recommendation to the Assembly. Thanks.

August 19, 2005
4825 Bayfield Terrace
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Governor Doyle,

Your proposal in AB-542 for central count of absentee ballots has several flaws. This includes the basic right in our constitution of the secret ballot. For details, see below. Then please review my suggestions that follow.

From the analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau:

“This bill discontinues the canvassing of absentee ballots at polling places. Under the bill, each municipal board of canvassers must convene at one or more public meetings held no earlier than the seventh day after absentee ballots for an election are distributed and no later than 10 a.m. on the day after the election for the purpose of counting absentee ballots. Under the bill, the board of canvassers does not announce the results of its count until the canvass of all absentee ballots is completed on the day after an election.”

Here are my concerns:

Ballot Secrecy

Our right to a secret ballot under our state constitution is being impinged. On page 65 line 8, “The board of canvassers shall mark the poll list number of each elector who casts an absentee ballot on the back of the elector’s ballot.” This makes each absentee ballot identifiable. Our current system does not call for this, and does not impinge upon ballot secrecy.

Knowledge of Partial Results before Election Day

Proposed 7.52 on page 64 describes a public canvassing of absentee ballots. This may be done before election day, and at multiple times. Yet 7.52 (7) on page 69 proposes, “If the board of canvassers meets under sub. (1) before the day after election day, the canvassers shall not announce the results and the records of the count are not open to public inspection and copying under s. 19.35 (1).”

When does the canvassing become closed to the public? Will the votes be counted in secret? This would be unacceptable. If the tally is supposed to be kept secret, the temptation to selectively reveal it will be great.

Manipulating results after election day

Since there is also the option to canvass absentee ballots after election day, these ballots may be critical in a close election. The exact number of votes needed to win may already be known. A count of absentee ballots delayed until after election day opens the door to fraud and suspicion.

This proposal will undermine citizens’ confidence in elections.

Here are my suggestions for guidelines that central counting of absentee ballots should follow. These guidelines minimize the above problems.

- Absentee ballots received before registration lists are printed ---- Ballots would be recorded as they are received as to voter (but not opened) as suggested by report of Milwaukee’s task force. The printed voter registration lists would include the information that a particular voter has voted absentee.

- Absentee ballots received between the time the registration lists are printed, and Friday at 5 pm of the week before election day ---- Prepare a supplemental list of absentee voters for each polling place, to be delivered to each Chief Inspector before election day. The pollworkers would hand-write in the printed lists that these are additional absentee voters.
- Absentee ballots received between Friday at 5 pm before election day and by the end of election day ---- Assign serial numbers per the Governor's proposal, section 7.52. They could later be retrieved if the elector voted in person. The number of ballots thus numbered should be minimized so as to have the highest level of protection for the secrecy of the ballot.
- If a municipality has more than 10,000 absentee ballots, ballots could be opened (and subject to challenge) on the day before the election, but not tabulated until the day of the election.
- Opening and tabulation should be completed on election day.

Here are additional issues to be considered:

- How will the following situation be handled? A voter comes to his polling place open election day and is told he cannot vote because he is listed as having voted absentee. He insists he did not. Will he be allowed to vote?
- Central counting of absentee ballots will probably cost more than the existing system. For most elections, absentees are processed by existing pollworkers who have time in mid-day when there are few voters. For central counting and the challenge procedure, additional workers will have to be hired. The only cost savings will be to eliminate the need for runners (\$6,728 for Milwaukee in November 2004).
- Changing the deadline for voter submittal of absentee ballots as suggested in the Milwaukee task force report would be unworkable. This would result in far too many absentee ballots being rejected.
- There should be an educational campaign to inform voters that absentee ballots are not as secure as voting in person (lost in the mail, no opportunity to correct overvotes, etc.), and that they should return them promptly.

Since there are numerous technical problems with this major change, consider a pilot program for 2006 for central count of absentee ballots. Let a municipality submit a written plan for approval by the State Elections Board and the Executive Director before they can undertake this change.

Sincerely,
 Paul Malischke
malischke@yahoo.com phone 608-238-8976