
Wisconsin Legislative Council

ACT MEMO



Prepared by: Katie Bender-Olson, Principal Attorney

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2023 Wisconsin Act 126
[2023 Senate Bill 822]

**Campaign Finance Filings and
Election Official Protections**

2023 WISCONSIN ACT 126

Act 126 makes changes relating to campaign finance filings and creates certain protections for clerks and other election officials.

Campaign Finance Filings

Candidates for state office and committees that support or oppose those candidates register and file campaign finance reports with the Wisconsin Ethics Commission. In contrast, under current law, candidates for local office and committees that support or oppose local candidates and referendums register and file campaign finance reports with local clerks.

Act 126 requires all state and local candidates and committees to register and file campaign finance reports with the Ethics Commission. The changes take effect on July 1, 2025.

Protections for Election Officials

Act 126 provides protections for election officials that ensure privacy of their personal information, prevent negative employment actions for reporting election fraud, and create a special battery crime for actions against them.

First, the act protects certain personally identifiable information of election officials¹ and election registration officials against disclosure under the Public Records Law. A governmental authority that possesses an election official's or election registration official's information may only provide access to the official's name, city, and state, and cannot provide access to records containing other personally identifiable information.

Second, Act 126 provides whistleblower protection to a municipal clerk, county clerk, or election official who lawfully reports election fraud or irregularities. These clerks and election officials cannot be discharged, disciplined, demoted, or otherwise discriminated against in regard to employment or threatened with those actions for reporting what they reasonably believe to be election fraud or irregularities.

Finally, the act creates a crime of battery to election officials. A person who intentionally causes bodily harm to an election official, election registration official, municipal clerk, or county clerk acting in his or her official capacity is guilty of a Class I felony.

The protections for election officials take effect on July 1, 2025.

¹ Section 5.02 (4e), Stats., defines "election official" to mean an individual who is charged with any duties relating to the conduct of an election.

Effective date: March 23, 2024

For a full history of the bill, visit the Legislature's [bill history page](#).

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