State of Wisconsin
2025 - 2026 LEGISLATURE

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ASSEMBLY SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT 5,

TO SENATE BILL 622

February 17, 2026 - Offered by Representative RIVERA-WAGNER.

AN ACT ***to renumber and amend*** 12.11 (1); ***to amend*** 12.11 (2); ***to create*** 12.11 (1) (b) and 12.11 (1m) (a) 5. and 6. of the statutes; **relating to:** inducements to sign or refrain from signing nomination papers, recall petitions, and certain other petitions.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Current law prohibits certain kinds of election bribery, including offering, giving, lending, or providing money or anything of value to an elector or other person to induce the elector to vote or refrain from voting. Under current law, "anything of value" includes an object having utility independent of a political message it contains, the value of which exceeds $1. Election bribery is a Class I felony, the penalty for which is a fine not to exceed $10,000 or imprisonment not to exceed three years and six months, or both.

This bill prohibits as election bribery such inducement of an elector to sign or refrain from signing a petition supporting or opposing a candidate, referendum, or proposition about political or social issues, state law, or proposed or potential legislation, if the petition is related to an election or referendum or is circulated during an election period, as defined in the bill.

Additionally, the bill prohibits as election bribery such inducement of an elector to sign or refrain from signing nomination papers or a recall petition.

Finally, the bill defines "anything of value" for purposes of a violation of the bill's provisions to include an object having utility independent of a political message it contains, if the object's value exceeds $5, rather than 1$.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 12.11 (1) of the statutes is renumbered 12.11 (1) (intro.) and amended to read:

12.11 **(1)** (intro.) In this section~~, "anything~~:

(a) "Anything of value" includes any amount of money, or any object which has utility independent of any political message it contains and the value of which exceeds $1, or $5 for purposes of sub. (1m) (a) 5. and 6. The prohibitions of this section apply to the distribution of material printed at public expense and available for free distribution if such materials are accompanied by a political message.

SECTION 2. 12.11 (1) (b) of the statutes is created to read:

12.11 **(1)** (b) "Election period" means any of the following:

1. The period beginning on December 1 and ending on the date of the spring election.

2. The period beginning on April 15 and ending on the date of the general election.

3. The period beginning on the first day for circulating nomination papers for a special election and ending on the date of the special election.

4. The period beginning on the first day for circulating nomination papers for a recall election and ending on the date of the recall election.

SECTION 3. 12.11 (1m) (a) 5. and 6. of the statutes are created to read:

12.11 **(1m)** (a) 5. Sign or refrain from signing a petition supporting or opposing a candidate, referendum, or proposition about political or social issues, state law, or proposed or potential legislation, if the petition relates to an election or referendum or is circulated during an election period.

6. Sign or refrain from signing nomination papers or a petition for the recall of an elective official.

SECTION 4. 12.11 (2) of the statutes is amended to read:

12.11 **(2)** This section applies to any convention or meeting held for the purpose of nominating any candidate for any election~~, and to the signing of any nomination paper~~.

(END)