



EXECUTIVE ORDER #175

**Relating to a Special Session of the Legislature to
Allow Binding Referenda and Ballot Initiatives**

WHEREAS, in countless instances regarding pressing issues of statewide importance to Wisconsin, the Wisconsin State Legislature has repeatedly rejected or altogether refused to consider policies that have broad and bipartisan public support of the people of the state;

WHEREAS, most recently, the Wisconsin State Legislature has again ignored the people of our state in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade* and upending nearly five decades of precedent and a constitutional right to abortion that Wisconsinites and Americans had relied on for almost 50 years;

WHEREAS, Wisconsin has an 1800s-era criminal abortion ban in state statutes, which originated before the Civil War and at a time when Wisconsin women did not yet have the right to vote, and could ban nearly all abortions in our state, including in cases of rape and incest;

WHEREAS, legislative Republicans have rejected multiple opportunities to protect reproductive freedom in Wisconsin by repealing the state's criminal abortion ban despite recent Marquette University Law School polling showing nearly 60 percent of Wisconsin voters support safe, legal access to abortion, over 60 percent oppose the decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, and more than 80 percent support exceptions for rape and incest;

WHEREAS, unlike more than 20 other states across the United States, including neighboring states such as Michigan, Illinois, and Ohio, Wisconsin lacks a process for the people of Wisconsin to bypass its Legislature by directly proposing and approving of new state laws and constitutional amendments, or conversely, by rejecting existing state statute;

WHEREAS, Wisconsinites deserve the opportunity to go to referendum on the issues that matter to them and enact the changes they wish to see for their families and their communities, most especially the opportunity to ensure they retain the reproductive rights they depended upon for nearly fifty years and the freedom to make the reproductive healthcare decisions right for them without interference from politicians; and

WHEREAS, this proposal to allow the direct input of Wisconsinites is in service of that which should be the driving principle for all Wisconsin officials, that "the will of the people is the law of the land."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TONY EVERS, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the Laws of the State, specifically Article IV, Section 11 and Article V, Section 4 of the Wisconsin Constitution, hereby require the convening of a special session of the Legislature at the Capitol in the City of Madison, to commence at 10:00 a.m. on October 4, 2022, solely to consider and act upon LRB-6542/1 and LRB-6543/1, relating to reserving to the people the power of referendum to reject acts of the Legislature and the power of initiative to propose and approve at an election laws and constitutional amendments (first consideration).



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great seal of the State of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in the City of Madison this twenty-first day of September in the year of two thousand twenty-two.

Tony Evers

TONY EVERS
Governor

By the Governor:

Douglas La Follette

DOUGLAS LA FOLLETTE
Secretary of State