



TYLER VORPAGEL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 27TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AB 240: Electioneering at a retirement home or residential care facility
Testimony of State Representative Tyler Vorpapel
Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections
August 25th, 2015

Thank you, Chairwoman Bernier and members of the Campaigns and Elections Committee for hearing Assembly Bill 240. AB 240 addresses complaints brought regarding electioneering on or near retirement homes or residential care facilities during periods where voting deputies are present. It was brought to my attention by Senator LeMahieu and I was more than happy to help work on this legislation with him. I've always made it a priority to do everything I could to protect the rights of those most vulnerable in our society and I feel this bill helps these members of society vote and engage in the political process without influence.

This bill still allows candidates to visit and discuss issues with voters residing in these homes, it simply stops candidates from visiting hours or minutes within their votes which could put them at risk of being coerced into voting for a candidate.

Thank you for your time today, and I am happy to answer any questions at this time.



DEVIN LEMAHIEU

STATE SENATOR

Testimony on AB 240

RE: electioneering at a retirement home or residential care facility

August 25, 2015

Thank you Chairwoman Bernier and Members of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections for hearing my testimony today on Assembly Bill 240.

The goal of this bill is to prevent undue influence or coercion of individuals voting under the Special Voting Deputy process in nursing homes and qualified facilities. We must protect the right of these vulnerable members of our society to vote and engage in the political process. That also includes protecting them from unwarranted influence when exercising that right to vote.

Current law prevents electioneering within a qualified retirement home or residential care facility while special voting deputies are present at the home or facility. AB 240 will extend that protection to prevent a candidate or candidates' agents from engaging in electioneering on the day voting will occur.

This legislation addresses a complaint I heard from a nursing home administrator of candidates requesting to appear just minutes or hours before the Special Voting Deputy process would commence. In that case, the administrator decided not to allow the candidate access because of her own concern about undue influence and coercion. With this bill, the law would prevent that situation from arising.

The unique nature of the Special Voting Deputy process makes this bill appropriate. On noticed days prior to an election Special Voting Deputies are sent from the clerk's office to qualifying facilities. The SVDs then conduct the voting process for facility residents who have requested ballots. This voting often takes place in a public area, such as activity room or common area. Current law does not prevent a candidate from appearing and addressing residents assembled for SVD voting in a common area, just minutes before voting is set to occur in that room. Again, this bill would prevent that situation.

Thank you again for the opportunity. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Comments in support of AB 240

August 25, 2015

I urge support for AB 240 because it clarifies current State statutes which designate as polling places those qualified residential facilities whose residents receive and vote their absentee ballots brought to them by municipal poll workers called Special Voting Deputies.

Due to the needs of those resident voters who are over the age of 60, lack adequate transportation to the appropriate polling place, are indefinitely confined or who may need assistance to vote, the polling place is brought to them.

AB 240 clarifies that the same rules governing "electioneering" apply to these designated residential voting sites as apply to in-person absentee voting in the office of the clerk or other off-site locations and at the polling place on Election Day.

Thank you to the legislators who understood the need to support this statute to clarify the rules.

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