
Wisconsin Legislative Council

AMENDMENT MEMO



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2023 Assembly Bill 414

Assembly Amendment 1

2023 ASSEMBLY BILL 414

This bill makes changes to the “50-piece rule,” which under current law prohibits any state or local elected official who becomes a candidate for national, state, or local office from using public funds for the cost of materials or distribution for 50 or more pieces of substantially identical material distributed after the following dates:

1. For any candidate who is nominated by nomination papers, the first day on which nomination papers may be circulated for the candidate.
2. For any candidate who is nominated at a primary election by write-in votes, the day the board of canvassers determines that the person is nominated.
3. For a candidate who is nominated at a caucus, the date of the caucus.
4. For any other candidate who is nominated solely by filing a declaration of candidacy, the first day of the month preceding the month that includes the last day for filing the declaration.

The bill extends the effective date of the 50-piece rule to the final day for filing nomination papers for a partisan office for a state representative who becomes a candidate for the partisan office and a state senator regardless of whether the senator is a candidate for the office, increases the number of substantially identical materials a senator may distribute under the rule from 50 to 150, and creates an exception for periods of emergency. The bill also imposes penalties for violations of the rule, which vary from a warning to a \$500 forfeiture, depending on when the violation occurred, and states that no forfeiture may be paid from a candidate’s campaign account.

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 1

Assembly Amendment 1 states that the 50-piece rule applies to a senatorial special election only if a senator becomes a candidate for that election and states that the rule does not apply to communications among legislators or between legislators and partisan or nonpartisan staff.

BILL HISTORY

Representative Steffen offered Assembly Amendment 1 on October 27, 2023. On January 18, 2024, the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections recommended adoption of the amendment on a vote of Ayes, 5; Noes, 2; and recommended adoption of the bill, as amended, on a vote of Ayes, 7; Noes, 0.

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

PJH:jal