

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE

December 6, 2023

To the Honorable Members of the Assembly:

I am vetoing **Assembly Bill 494** in its entirety.

This bill would restrict the definition of an indefinitely confined voter, create new and separate procedures for indefinitely confined electors to vote, and remove certain people from having an indefinitely confined voter status.

I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to the manner by which it targets certain voters and ongoing efforts by the Legislature to make it more difficult for eligible voters to vote.

Indefinitely confined voter status was developed to help voters with disabilities and who are aging and older or sick continue to exercise their constitutional right to vote. This bill substantially restricts that important status by narrowing the definition such that a voter can only be considered indefinitely confined if they cannot travel independently without “significant burden” due to frailty, physical illness, or a disability that is expected to last longer than one year. This bill provides no legal or medical justification for these changes, no definition for how an individual would interpret what a “significant burden” is or whether they have one, and no explanation for the arbitrary determination that a 13-month-long disability should qualify for indefinitely confined status while an 11-month-long disability should not, among other provisions that prompt more questions than certainty. Further, coupled with the bill’s definitional restrictions are additional barriers for voters with indefinitely confined status who want to cast their ballot, requiring these individuals to fill out a new, separate form from the standard absentee voting form and arbitrary provisions to remove some voters’ indefinitely confined status based on nothing more than when they registered.

The right to vote is a fundamental core value of our democracy. We should be making it easier, not harder, for eligible Wisconsinites to cast their ballot.

Respectfully submitted,
TONY EVERS
Governor