



# Mary Lazich

State Senator - Senate District 28

## Assembly Committee on Campaign and Elections March 12, 2014 Senate Bill 655

Good afternoon and thank you committee members and the public for your attention.

Senate Bill 655 (SB 655) modernizes and improves Wisconsin campaign finance law. The bill modernizes statutes for technology, harmonizes state law with federal law, and updates outdated statutory provisions.

SB 655 removes an unnecessary and burdensome regulation requiring campaign finance registrants to submit electronic filings and a hard copy. The bill allows a registrant to submit an electronic signature or a hard copy of the signature page, rather than a hard copy of the entire report.

SB 655 updates campaign finance statutes reflecting the prevalence of internet activity. SB 655 complies with Federal Election Commission rules and specifies volunteer internet activity is outside the scope of regulation. This ensures voluntary activity such as Facebook postings and blog entries are not subject to campaign finance regulations.

If, however, a payment is made for a communication to the general public for a political purpose, the activity is subject to reporting requirements. Similarly, the purchase or rental of email address lists is reportable activity.

The bill increases the threshold for registration of referenda activity from \$25 to \$2,500. The amendment increases the registration threshold for individuals and committees from \$25 to \$300.

The bill includes a date change for lobbyist contributions to candidates. The date is changed to align with the date for taking out nomination forms for an election. This complies with date changes in the federal MOVE Act. The bill does not make changes to existing law prohibiting lobbyist contributions prior to the final floor period or during special or extra session.

Another housekeeping measure in the bill solves a problem with conduit accounts. A contributor must grant permission before a contribution may be removed

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from a conduit account. Under existing law a problem arises at the time the original contributor becomes unavailable, relocates, or dies. SB 655 permits funds to revert back to the sponsoring PAC or administrative account for the conduit after 10 unsuccessful and documented contact attempts during a two year period. The bill permits a contributor's spouse or executor to authorize release of conduit funds.

I worked extensively with Senator Miller on **Senate Amendment 1** to this bill. The amendment adopts bi-partisan language approved by the Assembly in the Assembly Substitute Amendment to AB 225 about the amount of money that maybe spent to solicit PAC and conduit.

SB 655 makes improvements and updates to campaign finance law, and I hope I have your support to approve SB 655.



WISCONSIN REALTORS® ASSOCIATION

March 12, 2014

TO: Committee on Campaign and Elections  
FROM: Joe Murray, Wisconsin REALTORS Association  
RE: SB 655

Senate Bill 655 is a collection of changes to Chapter 11. The WRA supports SB 655 and has an interest in three provisions.

**Electronic Filing** – SB 655 allows for electronic signatures on reports and eliminates the need to file duplicate paper reports. This is a good, common sense change.

**Conduit Funds** – Includes the provision allowing for redirection of conduit contributions when you cannot find the conduit member. The funds need to have been held for 24 months and at least 10 attempts were made to contact the individual. The bill would allow for surviving spouse or executor to also redirect the contribution. This provision will help facilitate smoother administration of the conduit.

**Corporate Solicitation** – The bill eliminates the \$500 solicitation cap for corporate sponsors of PACs/conduits. Lifting the cap is long overdue. The \$500 solicitation cap was passed in 1974, when \$500 was worth a lot more than it is today.

We urge the Committee to support SB 655.