



BARBARA DITTRICH

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 38th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

November 2, 2023

Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

Rep. Dittrich Testimony on AB 571 – maintenance of the voter registration list, training of municipal clerks, data sharing agreements, pre-election procedures, and granting rule-making authority.

Thank you Chairman Krug and members of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections for taking testimony on this important legislation today. Like most of you, I have continued to hear from a flood of constituents regarding our electoral process since both the spring and fall elections of 2020. Many of those constituents have felt disenfranchised and have lost confidence in Wisconsin's elections. Both Democrats AND Republicans have voiced concerns over election integrity in previous years.

Thankfully, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee made the prudent decision to launch a forensic audit through the non-partisan Legislative Audit Bureau in February of 2021. That audit produced a 168 page report with thorough, thoughtful recommendations, detailing actionable steps to make Wisconsin's elections more reliable, transparent, and trustworthy for EVERY voter.

With those recommendations in mind, I have brought back legislation originally authored by Senator Kathy Bernier and myself. These steps would assure that voter rolls are properly maintained in a timely manner, consistency of training and procedures are maintained with clerks, and the reliability of equipment is ensured prior to elections.

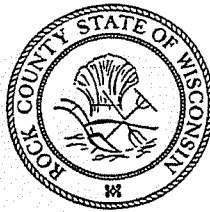
AB 571 implements a regular schedule for data to be requested from the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) and makes it clear that said information may be used by WEC to update state voter rolls. Under the bill, WEC must promulgate rules for additional clerk training related to certain aspects of electronic equipment usage. Municipal clerks must notify both the county clerk and WEC whenever election equipment is rented.

The steps detailed in AB 571 are neither radical nor onerous and should give every Wisconsin voter an extra measure of confidence in the integrity of their vote, regardless of which political party they choose. We legislators need to show leadership in unifying Wisconsin's voters by taking their concerns seriously and taking wise steps to address those concerns.

ROCK COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Office of the Rock County Clerk
51 South Main Street
Janesville, WI 53545

Lisa Tollefson, Rock County Clerk



Office (608) 757-5660

Fax (608) 757-5662

www.co.rock.wi.us

Lisa.Tollefson@co.rock.wi.us

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Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections:

Testimony for Public Hearing

Chair Krug and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing testimony today.

Assembly Bill 571 – relating to: maintenance of the voter registration list, training of municipal clerks, data sharing agreements, pre-election procedures, lines at the polls on election day, and granting rule-making authority.

INFORMATIONAL

- Vacancies
 - Notifying the election commission is important if there is a vacancy. The addition of notifying the county clerk would be appropriate. This usually happens now without the provision.
 - What happens if municipal clerk does not do their training, so they do not have to do the election?
 - What if there are multiple vacancies at the same time?
 - Many municipal clerks in smaller communities are basically the administrators of the municipalities. Municipal clerks have many more responsibilities to handle other than elections. Municipalities have home rule. They should be choosing who runs their elections. What if the county clerk is on the ballot? Is there a conflict?

- Default dates
 - Is there a place in statutes that requires a voter to re-register? Voters re-register when they move, change their name, new voter or they haven't voted in a long time and are no longer on the poll books.
 - Before the current system we have now, only municipalities with populations over 5, 000 needed to maintain voter registration lists. When the current system came into place the data bases in existence were pulled into the new system. Those databases may not have had a field for registration date. Databases require a number to be in the fields. The only active individuals in the system with default dates are voters who have not needed to register since before 2006.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lisa Tollefson