



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN
EDUCATION FUND

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October 31, 2011

To: Senate Committee on Transportation and Elections

From: Andrea Kaminski, on behalf of League of Women Voters of Wisconsin

Re: Statement about bills in today's committee hearing

The League of Women Voters believes government must welcome and encourage the informed and active participation of the citizens it serves. Only through open government can elected officials earn and deserve the trust of the people. We are disappointed, again, that you are holding a hearing on bills that were still in draft form as of Friday, October 28. To make matters worse, they were not available all weekend on the Legislature's website. One had to know where to look to find the drafts, making them available only to "insiders."

With regard to the bills being heard today:

LRB-3339/1. Relating to: residency of elections officials. We support the current law, which requires clerks to hire election officials from within the municipality where they vote. We note that clerks have told your committee they do not want additional changes in election law at this time. They are pressed to implement the changes that already have been introduced and do not wish to further confuse voters and election officials. We urge you to listen to the clerks, who are the people on the ground who administer our elections. The residency requirements for elections officials should not be changed at this time.

LRB 3356/1. Relating to: the initial applicability of 2011 Wisconsin Act 43. Given that the district lines set forth in 2011 Wisconsin Act 43 are the subject of a legal challenge, the law should not be amended to have them go into effect earlier than the date set forth in the Act. Amending the law at this point could result in districts lines that are redrawn not once, but twice before the November 2012 elections. This would cause considerable confusion and would not address the problem of disenfranchised voters in senate districts. The applicability date of Act 43 should not be changed.

We wish there had been more time to develop a response to some of the other bills before you today. Several of the bills you are considering have a high potential for resulting in partisan advantage. Without proper notice and opportunity for public input, the potential for public distrust is equally high.

Thank you.