



State Senator
Rick Gudex

District 18

January 23, 2014

To: The Senate Committee on Elections & Urban Affairs

From: Sen. Rick Gudex

Re: **Senate Bill 444**

Senator Lazich, members of the committee, thank you for hearing this bill today.

We all know the trials of running for office. We also know how important it is that we have plenty of people willing to undergo those trials, particularly at the local level. The more people interested and engaged in local government, the better that government is likely to be. We want to have multiple candidates running for office as often as we can.

Unfortunately, we know that's not always the case. Too often, no candidates make the ballot for local offices, and then those offices have to be filled by appointment, rather than by election. Oshkosh and Fond du Lac are having that trouble recently, particularly with city-wide, at large, aldermanic seats. These are members of the city council who represent the entire city, rather than a single aldermanic district.

Nomination signatures might be one reason for this. City wide offices in 2nd and 3rd class cities require a minimum of 200 nomination signatures. By comparison, a candidate for a district seat needs only 20 nomination signatures.

That's an enormous difference, and one that may be helping prevent otherwise willing people from running.

This bill reduces the number of signatures needed for city-wide office from 200 to 100. A hundred signatures is still a significant investment of time, and proof of community support.

You will notice that the bill reduces the signatures needed for city wide offices in 2nd and 3rd class cities, not just city council offices. This includes the mayor, treasurer, city clerk, etc. We did consider limiting the bill to only city council seats, but decided to leave it as it is, because we hope it will expand access to the ballot, interest in running, and therefore interest in local leadership and issues.

Thank you for your attention. I urge your support for this bill.