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# RON TUSLER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 3<sup>rd</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Testimony on  
Assembly Bill 898  
Assembly Committee on Campaigns & Elections  
February 13, 2020**

Fellow committee members, thank you for considering Assembly Bill 898. This bill makes varying changes to election laws aimed at clarity, security, and integrity.

## **Special Federal Elections**

As seen recently with the 7th Congressional District special election, determining the dates when a federal special election may be held to comply with federal law can be difficult due to disparities in Wisconsin and federal law on special elections.

Currently for a congressional special election, if a primary is necessary, it must be held four weeks before the special general election except when the special election is held concurrently with the spring election. This four-week period (or the period between a regular spring primary and spring general election) does not provide enough time to canvas and certify primary results to comply with the federal law for overseas voters.

AB 898 bill clarifies this disparity by requiring a special primary for federal office be held ten weeks before the special election.

## **Preventing Remote-Registration Fraud**

Identity fraud, tax fraud, and unemployment fraud are commonplace in the cyber age. In FY 19, the Wisconsin DOR prevented \$55 million in income tax refund fraud and has robust cybersecurity checks in place to monitor and catch the next scam.<sup>1</sup> Like tax fraud, Wisconsin is not immune from fraudulent unemployment insurance claims<sup>2</sup> which, thanks to the internet, know no state, national, or international boundaries.<sup>3</sup> These forms of fraud are common because it can be difficult to verify the identity of the person remotely filing the tax return or unemployment claim, leaving states trying to recoup fraudulent payments after the fact. Unlike these forms of fraud, a vote cannot be recouped once it has been cast.

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<sup>1</sup> "Protecting Taxpayers," State of Wisconsin Department of Revenue (last accessed Feb. 13, 2020), <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Individuals/ProtectingTaxpayers.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> Amanda Tyler, *Unemployment insurance scam targets Wisconsin*, WEAU 13 News (July 9, 2014), <https://www.weau.com/home/headlines/Unemployment-insurance-scam-targets-Wisconsin--266525601.html> (last accessed Feb. 13, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Scott Zamost and Drew Griffin, *Thieves find brazen way to steal your identity*, CNN (May 28, 2015), <https://www.cnn.com/2015/05/27/us/identity-theft-unemployment-fraud/index.html> (last accessed Feb. 13, 2020).

Federal law allows requiring in-person voting the first time an individual registers at a new address to vote. 52 U.S.C. § 20505 (c) (1) (2020). In order to prevent remote registration fraud from becoming remote vote fraud, under the bill if an individual registers to vote online or by mail, the first time that individual votes from that address must be in-person either on election day or in-person absentee. This provision is intended to be prospective and not retrospective, that is, if someone has registered to vote prior to enactment of this bill, the individual does not have to vote either in-person on election day or absentee.

Additionally, I have been working with Representative Anderson and other stakeholders since this bill was circulated for co-sponsorship to address access issues for individuals with disabilities and others. This bill embraces the exemptions in federal law for military and overseas voters, elderly and handicapped voters assigned to inaccessible polling places, and individuals otherwise entitled to vote under federal law. *See* 52 U.S.C. § 20505 (c) (2) (2020); *see also* 52 U.S.C. § 20102 (2020). These federal exemptions, though, do not encompass all those we currently have in Wisconsin law. While there is not an amendment finalized in time for this hearing, I would like to address a couple of issues to hopefully clarify and answer any questions in advance.

The amendment will exempt a number of situations in current law:

- 6.86(3)(a)1. (hospitalized voters who are registered)
- 6.86(3)(a)2. (registration by an elector who is in the hospital who requests a ballot pursuant to subd. 1., exempted above)
- 6.875 (3) or (4) (absentee voting in certain residential care facilities and retirement homes)
- 6.86(2)(a) (allowing an elector who is indefinitely confined to sign a statement requiring an absentee ballot be sent to the elector for every election)

We are also collaborating to address other issues such as transportation barriers and other individuals who live in settings similar to the ones previously mentioned but not covered under current law.

Further, the amendment will clarify that the in-person requirement applies to *new* registrations, not instances, for example, where someone changes a name or makes another non-address change but continues to vote at the same address. Finally, the effective date of this provision will be after the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Special Election so not to disrupt that election but to have in place ahead of the fall primary and general election.

I am encouraged by the progress we are making on addressing these issues and I am confident we will have an amendment to share with the Committee soon.

(Testimony Continued on Next Page)

### **Ballot Harvesting**

This provision was requested by the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) at its March 11, 2019 meeting. Per WEC meeting materials:

*Wisconsin Statutes do not prohibit the return of absentee ballots by individuals other than the voter. . . . [G]iven that the Statutes require the Commission to offer a subscription service providing continually updated information about the issuance and return of individual absentee ballots, a greater potential may exist for absentee voters to be contacted and asked if they need assistance in returning their ballot.”* The WEC approved a request to “insert language into Section 12.13(3)(m) to clearly prohibit failing or refusing to deliver a marked ballot collected from another voter to the municipal clerk or polling place . . .

### **Election & Ballot Tampering Penalties**

The bill raises the penalty for various practices from a class I felony to a class H felony to deter tampering and other forms of election interference:

- **12.13 (2) (b) 2.** – knowingly accepting a registrations or vote from someone not legally qualified to vote;
- **12.13 (2) (b) 6.** – intentionally causing a voting machine or equipment to fail or otherwise improperly count votes or to deceive an elector;
- **12.13 (3) (e)** – prepare a ballot to change the result of an election, improperly prepare deliver a ballot, or deliver an official ballot marked that might be counted for or against a candidate or referendum in question;
- **12.13 (3) (f)** – tamper with voting machines or equipment or mutilate, injure, or destroy a ballot;
- **12.13 (3) (L)** – break open or violate the seals or locks on a ballot box or add to or diminish the ballots contained within;
- **12.13 (3) (m)** – fraudulently change a ballot frustrating the elector’s intent;
- **12.13 (3) (mb)** – harvest ballots, as discussed above; and
- **12.13 (3) (z)** – tamper with tabulating equipment to prevent an accurate count of votes.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. I am open for questions.

Date: February 12, 2020

Re: AB 898 —Voting after Registration - Informational

To: Representative Tusler, Chair, Representative Sanfelippo, Vice Chair, and members of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

From: Barbara Beckert, Disability Rights Wisconsin, Director Milwaukee Office

Thank you, Chairman Tusler, Vice Chair Sanfelippo, and members of the committee for the opportunity to share this testimony to inform your consideration of AB 898, Voting After Registration. Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW) is the designated Protection and Advocacy system for Wisconsinites with disabilities. DRW is charged with protecting and enforcing the legal rights of individuals with disabilities, including mental health disabilities, investigating systemic abuse and neglect, and ensuring access to supports and services.

DRW receives funding as part of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) to provide education, training, and assistance to individuals with disabilities to promote their full participation in the electoral process, including registering to vote, casting a vote and accessing polling places. We provide training, resource materials, and advocacy assistance statewide, including staffing the Disability Rights Wisconsin Voter Hotline.

Much of our voting work is advanced collaboratively through the *Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition (WDVC)*, which is coordinated by DRW in partnership with the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD). The coalition is a non-partisan effort to help ensure full participation in the entire electoral process of voters with disabilities.

I want to thank members of the committee for your past responsiveness to addressing barriers for voters with disabilities. With your support and leadership, 2019 Wisconsin Act 48 (AB 168) was signed into last year to address a discriminatory practice which impacted voters with disabilities who could not speak their name and address. This new law is in place for our 2020 elections.

With appreciation of your past efforts to ensure the voting rights of voters with disabilities, it is important to be cautious in making changes to absentee voting which could create a new barrier for some voters with disabilities. Thank you for your consideration of these informational comments regarding AB 898 and the proposed changes to Voting After Registration.

DRW is on the front-line providing assistance to voters with disabilities and their families, service providers, and other disability organizations. Based on this work, we have seen the significant benefit of online voter registration (MyVote) and absentee voting for voters with disabilities. Many voters with disabilities experience barriers to voting in person, so the

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800 928-8778 consumers & family

ability to vote absentee and to register online have increased participation of voters with disabilities and allowed more Wisconsinites the opportunity to exercise their constitutional right. We continue to work to increase participation. The Rutgers University Fact Sheet on Disability and Voter Turnout in the 2018 Elections notes a 10.4% gap in Wisconsin voter participation between citizens with and without disabilities.

We are concerned about the provision in AB 898 which would require voters who register to vote electronically or by mail, to vote for the first time after such registration in person at the polling place or by in-person absentee ballot. Lack of access to transportation, accessibility issues at Wisconsin polling places, and fluctuating symptoms or other disability related conditions that on any given day can make it difficult to go out, are just some of the barriers that make it difficult for many voters with disabilities to get to the polling site to vote. We are concerned that requiring newly registered voters to vote in-person at their polling place or clerk's office will keep some people with disabilities and older adults from being able to cast their votes.

An additional concern is the challenge of how this change in the law would be operationalized. People may register online well in advance of an election and request an absentee ballot at another time. What safeguards will be in place to cross check absentee ballots with My Vote (and registration via mail) and inform voters that although they have applied for an absentee ballot, they are still required to vote in person. What will be the result if a voter is unaware of the requirement and submits their absentee ballot by mail? How will clerks administer and track this and what appeal rights will be in place?

Accessibility issues at Wisconsin polling places are one of the key reasons that absentee voting is so important for many people with disabilities and older adults. Wisconsin has the most decentralized voting system in the country, with 1850 municipalities. For a high-turnout statewide election there are roughly 2700 polling places in use across the state. Local municipalities have tremendous autonomy in how they address accessibility concerns and Wisconsin law has minimal requirements for training of clerks and poll workers regarding accessibility, as well as a very limited role for the Wisconsin Election Commission (WEC) in oversight and monitoring of accessibility concerns.

In November 2019, the WEC released *2019 Impediments Faced by Elderly Voters and Voters with Disabilities*. The report included an overview of findings from accessibility audits conducted by WEC staff and staff from Disability Rights Wisconsin. I have participated in those audits. While many Wisconsin polling places are welcoming and accessible, the audits have demonstrated that there continue to be polling places that are not accessible to voters with disabilities. One of the most important findings in the report is the significant reduction in the number of accessibility audits in Wisconsin, due to reductions in federal funding. In 2011-2013 elections, 1,614 were conducted and in 2019, only 48 audits were conducted. With such a dramatic drop in this activity, it is difficult to determine if there have been improvements in polling place accessibility. Wisconsin's aging population will increase the need for accessibility at our polling places, as well as increasing reliance on absentee voting.

Based on these accessibility concerns, there is a need for policy makers to be cautious in advancing any policies that may limit access to absentee voting for voters with disabilities and older adults.

We sincerely thank Representative Tusler for his willingness to consider an amendment to address the need of people with disabilities and older adults. Initial amendment language included exemptions for individuals in the hospital, those who live in licensed residential/ congregate settings, and those voters who have completed an absentee ballot with the designation of "indefinitely confined." Although these are all sound reasons to exempt voters from the in-person voting requirement, this testimony has shared with you the need for a broader exemption.

The majority of Wisconsinites with disabilities (as well as most older adults) do not live in congregate facilities. They live in their own home or apartment. As noted in this testimony, many votes have barriers related to their disability that can make it difficult for them to get to their polling place or to the site for in-person absentee voting. This is why online registration as well as absentee voting have been so significant in making it possible for many more Wisconsinites with disabilities to participate in the electoral process and assert their right to vote. We hear this often from the voters that we assist and from families and providers. The exemptions you have noted in the draft amendment are all very important and sound. However, we fear that a limited exemption would have the unintended consequence of leaving many voters with disabilities behind. A broad exemption for all voters with disabilities and older adults will ensure that AB 898 does not create new barriers for these voters.

DRW welcomes the opportunity to serve as a resource for legislators, as you consider opportunities to address voting rights and access for voters with disabilities.

Thank you for your consideration of these informational comments.





WISCONSIN BOARD FOR PEOPLE  
WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

February 13, 2020

Representative Tusler  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections  
Wisconsin State Capitol, Rm 22W  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Representative Tusler and Committee members:

The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) analysis of AB 898 finds the proposed changes to absentee voting process could disproportionately impact voters with disabilities, including voters with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Many voters with disabilities rely on the absentee voting process to exercise their right to vote. This bill would require people to vote in person for the first time after they register if they register electronically or by mail.

Transportation challenges frequently prevent voters from travelling to the polls. Many voters with disabilities are non-drivers, do not own or have access to a personal vehicle, do not have public transportation options to get to and from polls, have unreliable transportation options even if they are scheduled in advance, live in rural areas with few transportation options and greater traveling distance, or live in congregant residential setting where transportation is provided only at limited times or for specialized purposes (which may not include participation in all elections). Accessibility of polling places is also a constant concern, and a reason why many people with disabilities use the absentee voting process.

To clarify, we interpret the in-person voting requirement does not apply to existing registered voters who used electronic or by mail registration methods as allowed under current law and have subsequently voted absentee. If new in-person requirements retroactively apply to existing voters who have been using the absentee process, significant effort will be needed to explain the changes and ensure that routine absentee voters are not disenfranchised.

It is unclear in the draft whether the requirement to initially vote in person applies only to voters registering for the first time, or every time a voter updates their existing registration. Registered voters frequently move to new addresses that may report to different polling locations. If initial in-person voting requirements apply each time a voter changes their name or polling location, this will cause significant confusion and challenges for persons who rely on absentee voting to access polls.

Many voters with disabilities live in state regulated congregant settings--including Adult Family Homes (AFHs), Community Based Residential Facilities (CBRFs), Residential Care Apartment Complexes (RCACs) that provide Medicaid-funded residential services. Individuals in these settings may be moved at the initiation the service provider or others who are not the resident; this population is more likely to depend on absentee voting and less likely to be able to get to the polls to vote in-person.

We request a broad exemption to these requirements that includes:

- all people with disabilities and older adults
- persons who have selected the “indefinitely confined” option that allows them to always receive an absentee ballot.
- persons who are updating their existing voter registrations,
- registered voters who registered electronically or by mail prior to the effective date of the legislation,
- and include a process by which any voter registering electronically or by mail can remotely connect with the clerk in advance of the election in lieu of appearing in-person at the polling place.

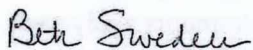
We suggest the bill include a specific date or timeframe that considers the current election schedule. As absentee voting is an established process used by many voters, it will be important for clerks and the voting public to understand these changes.

We note these changes to absentee voting will require additional and continual tracking by clerks. New registered voters who register electronically or by mail who are not exempt would not be able to vote absentee until after they have voted in person. This requires clerks to monitor new registered voters who have used two registration records, confirm when they have voted in-person, and then ensure that they are moved into the list of voters eligible to receive absentee ballots if so requested. Not all voters vote in every election, so it is possible that a “new” registered voter may still be subject to the in-person requirement many months or even years after they initially registered.

BPDD is charged under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act with advocacy, capacity building, and systems change to improve self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life for people with developmental disabilities (more about BPDD [http://wi-bpdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Legislative\\_Overview\\_BPDD.pdf](http://wi-bpdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Legislative_Overview_BPDD.pdf)).

Our role is to seek continuous improvement across all systems—education, transportation, health care, employment, etc.—that touch the lives of people with disabilities. Our work requires us to have a long-term vision of public policy that not only sees current systems as they are, but how these systems could be made better for current and future generations of people with disabilities.

Thank you for your consideration,



Beth Swedeon, Executive Director  
Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities





Greater Wisconsin  
Agency on Aging Resources, Inc.

Date: February 13, 2020

To: Chair Tusler, Vice-Chair Sanfelippo, and Members of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

From: Robert Kellerman, Executive Director

Re: **AB 898** – the time for holding special primaries, **requiring those who register electronically or by mail to vote in person the first time they vote**, obtaining another person's marked absentee ballot, tampering with voting machines or ballots, and providing a penalty - Informational

The Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. (GWAAR) is a nonprofit agency committed to supporting the successful delivery of aging programs and services in our service area consisting of 70 counties (all but Dane and Milwaukee) and 11 tribes in Wisconsin. We are one of three Area Agencies on Aging in Wisconsin. We provide lead aging agencies in our service area with training, technical assistance, and advocacy to ensure the availability and quality of programs and services to meet the changing needs of older people in Wisconsin.

Thank you for this opportunity to share testimony on AB 898. My comments are specific to the section of the bill pertaining to “requiring those who register electronically or by mail to vote in person the first time they vote.”

Online voter registration and absentee voting are important options to ensure that older adults and people with disabilities who can't make it to their assigned voting location are still able to cast their ballots. Lack of transportation options, mobility issues, accessibility concerns at the polling site (lack of accessible parking spaces, concerns regarding accessible entrances and pathways, etc.), caregiving responsibilities, weather concerns, and health problems are some of the reasons why older voters and voters with disabilities choose or need to rely on absentee voting. **Requiring newly registered voters to vote in-person at their polling place the first time they vote in their new district may keep some older adults and people with disabilities from being able to cast their votes**, as for some the obstacles will be too great.

For many older adults and people with disabilities absentee voting is not a convenience voting method, it is the method of necessity. For this reason, **we recommend the proposal include a broad exemption for all voters with disabilities and older adults.**

Thank you for your consideration of these informational comments.

Contact: Robert Kellerman, Executive Director  
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc.  
[bob.kellerman@gwaar.org](mailto:bob.kellerman@gwaar.org); (608) 243-5672



## **Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired**

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[info@wcblind.org](mailto:info@wcblind.org)

February 13, 2020

Dear Members of the Committee on Campaigns and Elections;

On behalf of Wisconsin residents who live with vision loss, I wish to express significant concern for Assembly Bill 898, which would require voters, who register online or mail in their registration, to vote at their polling place for the first election after registering. If passed, this bill could limit certain Wisconsin residents from having full access to their voting rights.

Some voters with blindness or significant vision loss choose to vote in our local polling places. Others vote absentee; either by choice or necessity for several reasons.

**Lack of Transportation Options** - Since we cannot drive, people living with vision loss are dependent on walkable communities, public transit, fee-based options like taxis or ridesharing or the generosity of family or friends to provide rides. Arranging transportation to the polls can range from frustrating, to a hardship to impossible. Rural residents are particularly vulnerable to a lack of transportation options.

**Accessibility Issues at the Polls** - Various accessibility issues throughout the state are well documented through anecdotal information and the Wisconsin Election's Commission accessibility audit program. These barriers include;

- Poor lighting and/or obstacles like stairs which make way finding difficult.
- Accessible voting equipment not set up or not functioning properly, which results in the voter being unable to cast a ballot privately and independently.
- Other voting-related tasks that require vision, like signing the poll book, are cumbersome or can lead to feelings of embarrassment.

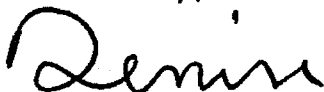
These transportation and polling place accessibility concerns make absentee voting the least restrictive option for some voters who are blind or visually impaired. Forcing newly registered voters to vote in-person at their polling place brings undue burdens to these voters and may result in them not casting their ballot.

The ability to register online through the MyVote.gov portal is critical for voters who are blind or visually impaired. The Wisconsin Elections Commission has done an exemplary job in making this portal accessible for those using screen-reading technologies. MyVote.gov is the only way to assure that people who are sight impaired can register to vote independently.

I encourage the committee to not advance this bill to the full Assembly in order to preserve the voting rights of Wisconsin's disenfranchised residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Denise Jess  
CEO/Executive Director

Date: February 12, 2020

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An additional concern is the challenge of how this change in the law would be operationalized. People may register online well in advance of an election and request an absentee ballot at another time. What safeguards will be in place to cross check absentee ballots with My Vote (and registration via mail) and inform voters that although they have applied for an absentee ballot, they are still required to vote in person. What will be the result if a voter is unaware of the requirement and submits their absentee ballot by mail? How will clerks administer and track this and what appeal rights will be in place?

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DRW welcomes the opportunity to serve as a resource for legislators, as you consider opportunities to address voting rights and access for voters with disabilities.

Thank you for your consideration of these informational comments.



# Make the Disability Vote Count in the 2020 Elections

February 18, 2020: Spring Primary

August 11, 2020: Partisan Primary


April 7, 2020: Spring Election & Presidential Preference

November 3, 2020: General & Presidential Election

## Register to vote online at MyVote.wi.gov



- Questions? Call Wisconsin Election Commission: **1-866-VOTE-WIS / elections.wi.gov** or email [elections@wi.gov](mailto:elections@wi.gov)
- For help with disability related voting issues: Disability Rights Wisconsin Voter Hotline: **844-DIS-VOTE / 844-347-8683**

The #2020Census counts: **Be counted!**





**“**  
I vote because it gives me a voice in all the elections.  
**”**

ZACHARY REETZ  
NESHKORO, WI



**“**  
I vote because it's my right! If I don't vote, I cannot hold people in office accountable. I want to make my community better and to set an example for others with disabilities.  
**”**

CINDY BENTLEY  
GLENDALE, WI


**“**  
If you do NOT vote then you cannot complain or share your concerns with the political leaders. That is why I vote—because I want my human rights as a Deaf person to be heard!  
**”**

DENISE JOHNSON  
WAUKESHA, WI

**“**  
I vote because it is a way all Americans can participate in our democracy and make informed decisions. Voting is a way we can show love to our country and neighbors.  
**”**

RAMSEY LEE,  
HUDSON, WI



## Follow Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition:

[www.disabilityvote.org](http://www.disabilityvote.org)

[www.facebook.com/wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition/](https://www.facebook.com/wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition/) • [info@disabilityvote.org](mailto:info@disabilityvote.org)





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February 13, 2020

To: Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

Re: Opposition to Assembly Bill 898

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. Our state election laws should provide citizens with maximum opportunity for registration, voting at the polls, and absentee voting. We oppose voting requirements that place undue burden on the voter or erect barriers to voter participation.

In particular, we oppose the measure in AB 898 which would require that an elector vote in-person at their polling place or in-person absentee the first time they vote after registering online or by mail. This provision:

1. Adds an unneeded layer of complication to the absentee voting process. Wisconsin voters are increasingly choosing to vote absentee, and this provision would curb the accessibility of this option;
2. Could disenfranchise college students who may be voting absentee for the first time and cannot vote in-person in the municipality in which they are registered;
3. Complicates voting for citizens who move frequently and therefore have to re-register frequently. People who are transient because they have limited resources often do not have access to transportation. They might not have child care available. They might not be able to afford time off from their jobs.
4. Burdens, in particular, voters with disabilities who may have difficulty getting to the polls, or who find it difficult to vote at the polls, but are not indefinitely confined.

Fair elections are accessible elections, which are free from unnecessary barriers to voting. AB 898 does nothing to improve election integrity, and it would make voting more difficult or even impossible for many qualified citizens.

We urge you to reject AB 898.





**Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers**

**3810 Milwaukee Avenue Madison, WI 53714**

**608-444-3842 v/text moryan@charter.net**

**To: Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections**

**From: Maureen Ryan, Executive Director WCILC**

**RE: AB 898**

**Date: 02/13/2020**

The Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers, Inc. (WCILC) is the state association for the 8 ILCs in Wisconsin. On behalf of WCILC, I would like to provide some concerns regarding AB 898, which proposes changes to the absentee voting process. These changes will provide undue and unnecessary burdens on people with disabilities and their civil right of voting by requiring to vote in person their first time.

First of all, there appears to be no proof that the absentee voting process has experienced fraudulent activity. What are we gaining by adding increased burdens? Many people with disabilities prefer to use the absentee voting process for a number of reasons:

- 1.) Lack of personal care providers to assist them with getting out of bed, dressed and ready to vote
- 2.) Lack of accessible affordable transportation to get to the voting polls
- 3.) Many polling sites in Wisconsin are still sadly inaccessible
- 4.) Some types of disabilities present symptoms that are unpredictable and a person may not think its wise to risk their ability to get to the polls on any particular future voting days.

WCILC strongly encourages that you exempt people who cannot experience voting at the polls due to their disability related issues. Thank you.



See Our ~~dis~~Ability

To Members of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections:

Please oppose AB 898, requiring those who register electronically (on My Vote) or by mail to vote in person the first time they vote. The opportunity to register to vote online and to cast an absentee ballot have increased the number of people with disabilities who vote. If this bill goes through, we are concerned that this would be a hardship for many voters with disabilities who vote absentee. As an organization run by and for people with disabilities, we see our consumers encounter many barriers to in-person voting. Some of these barriers include 1.) people who medically cannot drive 2.) wheelchair users whose accessible van is out for repairs 3.) due to caregiver shortage, the person may not have caregivers who can drive them to the polls (and many other places). 4.) Specialized transportation such as the Transit Plus regularly arrives as much as \*3 hours\* late--and goodness knows if they'll be on time for pick-up! Making it hard to plan the day and get things done.

There also seem to be a number of questions as to how this would logistically work. Time between elections are sometimes months apart. What would happen in they registered a few months prior and don't have the information fresh in their mind? How would election officials track who registered online and who registered in person? Would people who moved or changed their name have to vote in-person every time their lives changed? These are important considerations when seeking to serve Wisconsin voters in an efficient and equitable manner. People First Wisconsin thanks members of this committee for your past support for voters with disabilities by passing AB 168 last year. It provided accommodation if a voter is unable to state their name and address. We appreciate your consideration of our concerns regarding AB 898.

Sincerely,

People First WI