



Jeff Mursau

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 36TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Assembly Committee on Local Government
AB 168- Village Officers Serving as Village Employees

April 15, 2021

Chairmen Novak and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Assembly Bill 168, which allows village officers to serve as village employees.

Senator Felzkowki and I are introducing this legislation after a constituent contacted my office and made me aware that our current statutes prevent a person who serves as a village officer from gaining employment by the village. The example he shared was that a crossing guard position was open in the small village where he lives. The only person who expressed interest in the position was a retired individual who also served as a village board member. Unfortunately, the individual was ineligible to apply because state law prohibits a village officer from working for the same village in which they represent, and therefore the crossing guard position went unfilled for some time.

Under current law, members of town, village, county board or city council are generally ineligible for any office or position that the board or council has the authority to fill. However, **a specific statutory provision authorizes a town board member to receive an hourly wage, not exceeding \$15,000 each year, as a town employee. This bill extends this same provision to members of a village board.**

This simple change will give smaller communities some flexibility in filling necessary positions that have been vacated by village staff who have quit, retired, or need to take a leave of absence for an extended period of time.

The senate companion bill had a public hearing last week and received positive testimony.

Once again, thank you for holding a public hearing on this important piece of legislation. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Bruce, Cory

From: Ann Walenski <awalenski@menominee.edu>
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:52 PM
To: Rep.Mursau
Subject: Senate Bill 187

Dear Rep, Mursau,

As a village trustee for the small village of Cecil I support the passing of WI Senate Bill 187 that would allow village officials to also be employed by the village.

We have many difficulties in recruiting and hiring maintenance workers in the Village of Cecil. An elected official would be a financial benefit as well as a qualified person to help in times of need, especially in the winter months.

You have my support.

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Ann M. Walenski
Instructional Designer/Faculty
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Why Wait? CMN is your community college.

Bruce, Cory

From: Cap Wallrich <cap@wallrich.com>
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:41 PM
To: Rep.Mursau
Subject: Support of WI Sen Bill 187

Dear Rep Mursau,
As a village trustee for the small village of Cecil I support the passing of WI Senate Bill 187 that would allow officers to also be employed by the village.
We have had a terrible time finding and holding on to maintenance workers in Cecil and some of our trustees would be qualified to help in times of need, especially in the winter months.

You have my support.

Thanks,
Cap Wallrich
420 E Freeborn St
Cecil WI 54111

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To: Assembly Committee on Local Government
From: Curt Witynski, J.D., Deputy Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities
Date: April 15, 2021
Re: AB 168, Allowing village trustees to be hired as village employees

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities supports AB 168, allowing village board members to be employed by the village and receive an hourly wage, not exceeding \$15,000 each year, as a village employee. The bill mirrors a current law provision allowing town board members to be hired by the town and earn wages up to \$15,000 annually.

The league worked with the authors on drafting this bill because we regularly hear from our members about the challenges small communities face when trying to fill vacancies in positions such as deputy clerk, crossing guard, caretaker of the cemetery, and seasonal help with mowing or plowing. In small villages, like towns, often the most qualified or most logical, or sometimes the only person available to fill a village job opening is a board member.

This bill is necessary because common law rules and statutory provisions prohibit a municipal governing body member from being employed by the community while serving on the governing body. This bill is limited to villages. It would not apply to cities.

We urge the committee to recommend passage of AB 168. Thank you for considering our comments.

From: patriotiam1776@tds.net <patriotiam1776@tds.net>

Sent: Monday, April 5, 2021 12:45 PM

To: Curt Witynski <witynski@lwm-info.org>; Toni Herkert <therkert@lwm-info.org>

Subject: SB 187

Dear Curt and Toni:

Here are my thoughts on SB187:

- 1) I had to give up my board seat to work in the Village Office as the Deputy Clerk. I felt that my seat/work on the Village Board did not supersede my ability to process utility billings within the Village. Nor would my work as a Deputy Clerk interfere with the duties of my Village Board seat. I felt that should I be able to run as Village President that the regular hours on site at the Village Office could be utilized twofold: one as the utility billing clerk and two as the Village President holding regular office hours.
- 2) A large number of towns and/or villages have a small number of residents even willing to take on the duties of the Village Board or President. For the most part, most residents have a full-time job and serve at the Village on a part-time basis. The point is that with the small number of willing candidates we do find that we do not have enough warm bodies to fill out all of the necessary seats on village boards and village committees.

Opening up the prospect of dual service duty may inspire a larger number of residents to become candidates. I know that I would have thrown my name into the hat for the election occurring on April 6th, to serve on the Board, should this legislation have been passed into law.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Have a great day!

Becky Kienzle
Deputy Clerk
Village of Dickeyville
608-568-3333 ext 1

From: Tracy Carlson <Tracy@villageofbaldwin.com>

Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:36 PM

To: Curt Witynski <witynski@lwm-info.org>; Toni Herkert <therkert@lwm-info.org>

Subject: AB 168/SB 187

Good afternoon –

This is in regards to the bill to allow village board members to be employees being paid up to \$15,000.

This is an excellent idea and I fully support this bill. We have a cemetery caretaker who is seasonal and earns no more than \$6500/year. He has shown interest in serving on the village board, but his job as caretaker prohibits him from doing so. Finding someone who is available late spring to early fall to take care of our cemetery in a caring, loving manner is difficult and our caretaker likes his job. He is not willing to give up his caretaker job to run for village board when he knows how hard it is to find someone to fill the cemetery position.

Please encourage the passing of this bill. It will provide for part-time employees and/or seasonal employees to add their names to an already scarce pool of people interested in public service as an elected official.

Thanks for your consideration.

Tracy

Tracy Carlson
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