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February 10, 2005

To: Wisconsin Legislators  
From: City Clerk Margaret Ciccone  
Re: Wisconsin Legislative Council Staff Memorandum(s)  
Election Issues Raised by Committee Members

Please consider the following comments when you deliberate the proposed changes in elections laws. My Deputy Terri Kalan and I reviewed the Wisconsin Legislative Council Staff Memorandum(s) documents and have commented on various topics as they are presented in the report(s). If there is no comment on a topic, in general, it is something we can live with.

**December 8, 2004 Memo No. 4**

**ABSENTEE BALLOTS** page 6

**Early voting** The concept of early voting should be completely understood if it is going to be used. Right now a voter can cast an absentee ballot which is easily obtainable and should be used if someone is unable to vote on election day. Allowing early voting will not reduce the workload of poll workers on election day because every ballot will need to be processed in the appropriate precinct unless the state is designing another program and will purchase additional equipment to process early results. It will also increase the workload of the City Clerk's Office which is understaffed and overworked already. This could be another item that will increase local spending - increase taxes.

**Reason for Voting** The committee should review the absentee ballot request policy. This past Presidential election proved extremely difficult and expensive regarding absentee ballots. Numerous political parties mailed postcard type absentee requests to everyone, registered or not. Many of the unregistered voters sent the requests to us and we spent considerable time and money on follow-up to get some of the people registered - some could not be located.

**Digital signatures** Disagree. People know months in advance of big elections, i.e. Presidential elections. There really is no excuse for them to not get their request to us for an absentee ballot in a timely manner. I understand there may be an emergency that can call a person out of town unexpectedly but we already allow fax requests for this.

**Where ballots may be sent** Disagree. Why would we restrict locations where ballots may be sent? People, especially those that are retired, travel around and may not have an actual temporary address.

**Who may deliver ballots and provide assistance with voting** Only the Clerk and persons designated and sworn by the Clerk should be entrusted with this duty.

I am concerned about limiting who may provide assistance to absent voters, especially if it is limited to immediate family members, etc. Many elderly may not have immediate family members available. Some family members may take advantage of a vulnerable relative. Ballot handling should be limited to the Clerk and designated staff/sworn officials.

**Requesting by Fax or E-mail** We already accept request via fax. Military electors have federal post card requests readily available to them. The better option might be to make sure the military is properly trained on getting voting information out to the men and women of our military.

**Power of Attorney** A person holding a power of attorney should be prohibited from completing an absentee request and voting a ballot of behalf of a voter.

**Date of Partisan Primary** Standardize all elections no matter what time of the year they are held. Set up time tables that allow sending ballots (uniform) one time. Allow ample time between elections.

**Age of Witness** Who is an adult? A 16 year old can work at the polls, drive a car, etc. Be clear on the age.

### **REGISTRATION/POLL LISTS** page 9

**Fee for copy of Registration List** The fee for a statewide voter registration list should be substantial. We charged \$100 for a City-wide list. \$1000 for a statewide list is not too much.

**Registration Deadline** There should be a registration deadline prior to the election. This would require voters to be responsible for the privilege of voting.

**Same-day registration** Discontinue same day registration and you can eliminate some of the topics on this listing.

**Vouching** Vouching should no longer be allowed. A person should be able to prove their residence.

**Oversight of Registration Deputies** Agree. Clerk's should be given more discretion to appoint and regulation registration deputies.

**Confidentiality of Registration** Agree. Privacy protections should be increased when registration is done through a registration deputy.

**Identification Requirements for New Registrants** Identification should be required for voters who register through a registration deputy. However, I disagree that voters who register through deputies be required to show identification at the polls. If they do not have the proper ID at time of registration, then they should not be registered. If you want to cash a check, get on a plane, register for a class you need to have identification. Why are we not requiring the same responsibility for casting a vote? It is very time consuming, inefficient and allows too much room for error to keep a separate list of people who need to show ID at the polls.

**Acceptable Identification** Agree. Acceptable identification should be limited to a state issued ID card(s).

### **ELECTION OFFICIALS** page 14

**Political Party Representation** I agree that Clerks should be allowed to reject nomination of poll workers by political parties who are not competent or able to fulfill their duties. Political parties may have their own agendas and we should not be at their mercy to accept workers who may also have agendas.

**Sufficient Numbers** Agree. We need ways to recruit poll workers and to make it easier for person to serve as a poll worker.

### **VOTING EQUIPMENT** page 15

There should be **NO** unfunded mandates. The Federal government allotted funds for equipment and that burden should not be placed on the municipality.

**Definition of Polling Place** Redefining polling places to minimize expensive equipment should be explored, especially since many, if not all, municipalities are facing budget issues.

**Paper trail** You must **insist** on a paper trail. There is too much room for error without the ability to hand count any election result.

### **MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES** page 17

**Qualifications of Circulators** perhaps new legislation should be considered to challenge this decision on a local level. Why would you want someone from another jurisdiction having authority to petition a community they do not live in?

**Timing of Certification and Ballot delivery** Agree, especially with the Election Board sending a draft of the ballot to County Clerks along with a Type A notice to allow Clerks to start the ballot setup.

**December 8, 2004 Memo No. 5**

**POLL HOURS** page 2

**Uniformity of Hours** Agree. All municipalities should have uniform poll hours to avoid confusion.

**Extended voting** Review but remember no unfunded mandates, there will be substantial additional costs.

**Weekend Voting** Review but remember no unfunded mandates, there will be substantial additional costs.

**CONDUCT AT POLLS** page 6

**Observers** Agree there should be clearer guidelines regarding activities of observers.

**Challenges** Agree law should be reviewed.

**Electioneering Activities** Agree there should be clearer guidelines.

**VOTER IDENTIFICATION** page 8

**Required Identification** Agree there should be stricter requirements for voter identification at the polls.

**Department of Transportation Information** Agree this should be reviewed

**Harmonization and Updating of Identification Requirements** Agree, however, I believe only a state issued picture ID with current residence should be allowed.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Provisional Ballots** Provisional ballots should be done away with. If a person is going to pre-register, they should have proper ID. Allowing them to register without the proper ID and allowing them to show their ID at the polls is very time consuming and costly. If they cannot show proper ID then they should not be allowed to preregister. If they cannot provide proper ID to register on election day, then they should not be allowed to vote.

Also review the reasoning behind provisional ballots - if there is a registration cut off why would there be a need for provisional balloting? I read somewhere that the election laws were to be simplified for the constituents as well as the poll workers. Provisional ballots were extremely confusing. I understand they are for Federal elections but when you read state law it is not clear - it reads as though provisional ballots could be used for every election.

c: Douglas County Clerk Sue Sandvick