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## **Governor Doyle Unveils Statewide Election Reform Package**

MILWAUKEE – Governor Jim Doyle today unveiled a comprehensive election reform package designed to improve the integrity of the election process, increase competition in legislative races through redistricting reform, and maintain Wisconsin's proud tradition of promoting greater participation in its elections.

"Many of the problems raised with the November 2004 election appear to be the result of poor management and overwhelmed and inadequately trained poll workers," Governor Doyle said. "My proposal is designed to directly address these process problems, with an emphasis on making our elections more orderly and efficient. Most importantly, it does so without discouraging qualified citizens from voting."

The Governor's proposal includes measures to better prepare for elections and ensure smooth and orderly voting processes, training requirements for poll workers, and actions to better prevent voter fraud.

"These are the types of common-sense reforms Wisconsin needs to address an overwhelmed and under resourced election system, without compromising the constitutional right to vote," Governor Doyle said. "Nothing in the proposed photo I.D. bill will correct the management and process problems that have been identified."

Specific proposed reforms by Governor Doyle include:

- An early voting option for all eligible voters;
- Mandatory training for all poll workers;
- An extensive outreach campaign to recruit more poll workers;
- Mandatory training for all special registration deputies;
- Prohibit voter drives from paying individuals on a per voter or quota system;
- Uniform voter registration cards;
- Allow eligible voters to register to vote when applying for or renewing a driver's license;
- Require municipalities to develop Election Day plans designed to meet a 30-minute maximum waiting time at the polls;
- Allow access to voter birth date information again to allow for better oversight, but prohibit the use or sale of such information for commercial purposes or the display of such information on the Internet;
- Statewide, uniform poll hours;
- Require a map to be displayed at every polling location, directing voters to their proper voting wards;
- Merge the State Elections and Ethics Boards into a single independent agency; and

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- Require state legislative districts to be drawn by the non-partisan Legislative Reference Bureau, in order to ensure more competitive races.

All of these measures will be implemented using funds from the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA). To date, Wisconsin has received approximately \$50.4 million under HAVA.

"This proposal will promote access, accuracy and accountability in elections," Governor Doyle said. "These reforms will strengthen the voting process, provide for competitive elections, and lend further credibility to future election results."

Governor Doyle was joined at the announcement by Senators Lena Taylor, Spencer Coggs, Tim Carpenter, and Jeff Plale, and Representatives Tamara Grigsby, Jon Richards, and Christine Sinicki. Governor Doyle thanked them for their input and said he looks forward to working with them on getting his proposal passed.

### **GOVERNOR DOYLE'S ELECTION REFORM PACKAGE:**

#### **Early Voting**

To help ease Election Day pressures, the Governor called for Wisconsin to join the 23 other states that already allow for early voting. Municipalities will be allowed to start counting ballots before Election Day; however, no election results would be released until after the polls close.

The early voting period will mirror the timeline for absentee voting in Wisconsin, but early voting will also be allowed to take place on weekends.

While early voting will be available at municipal clerks' offices, the Governor's early voting proposal will also allow municipalities to establish satellite early voting locations at places such as grocery stores, shopping malls, libraries, community centers, and senior centers. Voters may also cast their ballot by mail.

#### **Mandatory Training For All Poll Workers**

Currently in Wisconsin, only chief elections inspectors are required to receive training. The Governor's proposal will require that all poll workers receive a certain level of training, to ensure consistent administration of elections across the state. The State Elections Board will be responsible for administering and determining the content of the course, offered in person, on-line, and by videotape.

#### **Expanded Poll Worker Recruitment**

The Governor will launch a variety of initiatives to ensure a larger polling workforce to meet statewide needs. In particular, the Governor will encourage volunteerism on Election Day, calling on private companies to allow employees who work as poll workers to take Election Day off without losing pay.

Additionally, the Governor will be launching an extensive outreach campaign to encourage high school students to volunteer at the polls. Wisconsin law already allows qualified high school students to serve as election officials on Election Day with parental and principal approval.

The Governor will also partner with municipalities and counties to facilitate the sharing of municipal and state workers, particularly in areas that have difficulty meeting the needs of registered voters. Such intergovernmental cooperation will include allowing local and state employees to assist a municipality with pre-Election Day activities, including the processing of registration cards and staffing early voting locations prior to Election Day.

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The Governor also offered his support of the removal of residency restrictions on municipal clerks and certain other election administrators to allow them to register voters or fill in as poll workers in municipalities in which they are not residents.

### **Mandatory Training for Special Registration Deputies**

Currently, any qualified elector of the state may apply to the State Elections Board to be appointed as a special registration deputy to assist municipalities in the task of registering voters. However, under current law, there is no prescribed training that a special registration deputy must complete. The Governor called for mandatory training of all special registration deputies to promote the more accurate and complete collection of voter information.

### **30-Minute Maximum Waiting Time**

The Governor proposed a requirement that municipalities develop Election Day plans. The plans, approved by each municipality's common council, will be designed to achieve the goal of no voter waiting longer than thirty minutes before voting and will ensure proper oversight of election processes. Wisconsin would be the first state in the country to enact such a law.

#### Election Day Plans will be required to include:

- Details on pre-election education on voting eligibility and procedures;
- Strategies to ensure adequate staffing for pre-election activities and on Election Day;
- The assignment of at least one poll worker to monitor lines to make sure that voters are standing in the right lines, and answer questions;
- Measures to ensure the orderly and efficient flow of voters at every polling location;
- Contingency plans to deal with higher than expected voter turnout, including the requirement of having a group of trained, on-call reserve poll workers;
- Tight management controls to ensure accountable and orderly election processes; and
- A specified post-election review process designed to cover compliance with relevant election laws, determine whether the 30-minute standard was met, and provide ideas on how to improve the administration of future elections.

### **Additional Safeguards to Ensure Ineligible Felons are Not Allowed to Vote**

The Governor proposed that the Statewide Voter Registration leave the name of an ineligible felon on the list with a notation that the individual is not eligible to vote, such as an asterisk or the date probation or parole, thereby prompting an election worker to have the voter fill out a challenged ballot instead of sending the person to the same-day registration line. By filling out a challenged ballot, the voter will still be able to vote in case the notation was an administrative error and the voter is not, in fact, an ineligible felon. The challenged ballot may be discounted later if the voter is found to be definitively ineligible.

The Governor's proposal also requires same-day registrants to be cross-referenced post-election against an updated Department of Corrections list to determine whether any ineligible felons voted that were not on the Statewide Voter Registration (due to being a first-time voter) or who were sentenced after the Statewide Voter Registration information was distributed to polling places.

Additionally, a same-day registration voter will have to affirmatively check on his or her registration form that the voter is not a felon currently on probation or parole, before being allowed to vote. Under current law, voters are only required to certify that they "are not disqualified on any ground from voting".

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### **Allow Access to Voter Birth Date Information For Better Oversight**

The Governor's proposal would again allow access to voter birth date information to prevent fraud through an open records request, but prohibit the use or sale of such information for commercial purposes or the display of such information on the Internet. Individuals seeking such information will be required to sign an affidavit, stating that the birth date information will not be used for any unauthorized purposes. Access to this information will help determine whether someone voted twice, a felon voted improperly, or someone voted as a dead person.

### **Prohibit Voter Drives From Paying Workers on a Per Voter or Quota Basis**

Currently, many voter drives encourage voters to fill out registration forms and are paid on a per-voter or quota basis, thereby providing a financial incentive to cheat by forging signatures or registering the same voter multiple times. The Governor's proposal will prohibit such practices, and thus would protect the quality of the information being filled out. Workers could still be paid for their time spent registering voters.

### **Uniform Registration Cards**

Currently, registration forms often differ from municipality to municipality, given that the statute only requires the forms to contain certain information. The Governor has proposed a requirement that the State Elections Board create a statewide registration card that must be used by all municipalities in order to ensure the more orderly collection of registration information.

### **Allow People to Register to Vote at their DMV**

To help ease the pre-election workload of municipal clerks, the Governor proposed allowing people to register to vote when applying for or renewing a driver's license.

### **Uniform Poll Hours**

The Governor offered his support for statewide, uniform poll hours. Wisconsin currently allows different poll hours for different classes of municipalities. The proposal would require all polling places to be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

### **Require Maps to be Displayed at Every Polling Location**

A common problem during elections is new voters standing in long lines to vote only to learn upon reaching the front of the line that they were at the wrong polling location. To reduce Election Day confusion, the Governor's proposal requires a map to be posted at all polling places serving multiple wards that would direct voters to their proper polling place.

### **Merging the State Elections and Ethics Boards**

Governor Doyle also offered his support to transform the State Elections and Ethics Board into one agency, more effectively administering and independently enforcing state election and ethics laws.

### **Redistricting Reform**

Despite the nearly even partisan divide in Wisconsin, only two incumbent legislators facing re-election were defeated in the 2004 general election. Of 116 total legislative races in 2004, 57 races had no major party opponent. Forty-nine legislative incumbents faced no opponent whatsoever.

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Governor Doyle is committed to restoring competition and true representation to Wisconsin legislative elections, and has therefore called for redistricting reform.

Under the Governor's proposal, non-partisan staff in Wisconsin's Legislative Research Bureau (LRB) will draw state legislative districts using criteria that are proven to create competitive districts. When creating legislative districts, LRB will be prohibited from using incumbents' addresses and previous election results. This factor is often cited as a key to creating independent districts and competitive elections. New district boundaries will coincide with other political boundaries, be contiguous and compact, and meet all of the requirements of the Voting Rights Act.