

Reps. Subeck, Zamarripa, Brostoff: Propose bill to ensure all Wisconsinites can participate in the legislative process

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MADISON- Today, Representative Lisa Subeck (D-Madison), Representative JoCasta Zamarripa (D-Milwaukee), and Representative Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee) introduced legislation which would establish a process for individuals with special needs, including non-English speakers, those in need of sign language interpreters, and those who need materials in alternate formats to access the resources necessary to participate in public hearings and other meetings.

“During the last legislative session, the Assembly Committee on Urban and Local affairs held a hearing at which dozens of non-English speakers came to testify, but no plan was in place to provide interpreters,” said Rep. Subeck. “While some members of the public in attendance stepped up to help, there was a clear barrier for non-English speakers to participate. Our bill will break down language barriers and provide accommodations for people with disabilities to better enable all of Wisconsin’s residents to access their government.”

The proposed bill would ensure translation and interpretation services needed by members of the public are provided at committee meetings of the State Legislature and would establish a clear process for requesting an interpreter or meeting materials in alternate formats. The bill would also require all legislative meeting notices to have a standardized statement in English, Spanish and Hmong regarding

access to these services.

“There is nothing more American than equal access to the government and this bill will help provide that for the Hmong, deaf, deaf/blind, hard of hearing, and other communities that have previously had barriers put up when trying to engage in the Democratic process,” said Rep. Brostoff.

“Whether you need an interpreter or need materials printed in an alternative format or language, it should not be a barrier for participating in state government,” said Rep. Zamarripa. “As legislators, we want as many people as possible to be able to engage in the legislative process.”