

Rep. Subeck: Legislation to allow municipal officials to serve as election officials passes State Senate

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MADISON – Yesterday, the State Senate passed Assembly Bill 85, authored by Representative Lisa Subeck (D-Madison), Representative Ed Brooks (R- Reedsburg), and Senator Janet Bewley (D-Ashland), to allow municipal officials to serve as election officials. Prior to 2016, it was not unusual for members of City Councils and Village or Town Boards to serve as poll workers on Election Day. The practice was discontinued after an attorney from the League of Wisconsin Municipalities provided a legal opinion that the practice is actually prohibited under state statute.

“The City of Madison alone lost four highly experienced chief polling inspectors due to the new interpretation of the law,” said Representative Lisa Subeck. “The bill passed by the Senate yesterday provides a simple fix to state law by once again allowing local elected officials to serve as election officials, as had previously been the widely accepted practice.”

Under current law, a member of a municipality’s governing body is prohibited to hold another office or position of employment within the city, village or town with three narrow exceptions. AB 85 would add serving as an election official to the list of exceptions. The bill does not remove the prohibition currently in place that prevents an elected official from serving as an election official where his or her name is on the ballot.

The bill is supported by the League of Wisconsin Municipalities and the Wisconsin Towns Association.

“For years, local elected officials helped keep our elections running smoothly,” said Rep. Subeck. “As our local communities often struggle to recruit enough poll workers for election day, this law will ease that burden by enabling municipal elected officials to again serve in this capacity.”

AB 85 has now passed both the State Assembly and State Senate and will now head to the Governor.