

Rep. Hebl: Circulates constitutional amendment to give Wisconsin citizens a direct voice

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Rep. Gary Hebl, (608) 266-7678

(MADISON) – Today Representative Gary Hebl (D- Sun Prairie) circulated LRB-0151, a constitutional amendment that will give more power to the citizens of Wisconsin by enabling them to veto legislatively-passed laws at the ballot box.

In order to get a citizen veto referendum on the ballot, signatures equaling 4% of the total votes of the most recent gubernatorial election must be collected. If Wisconsin votes reject a law it may not be reenacted during the same legislative biennium in which it was rejected, which will prevent the Legislature from circumventing the will of the people.

“We as legislators are accountable to the people of our state,” Hebl said. “If voters believe legislators are passing legislation that is not in the best interest of the people of Wisconsin, the people should absolutely have the power to say ‘No.’ This constitutional amendment allows just that.”

LRB-0151 also creates a method for citizens to propose their own laws and constitutional amendments.

“Only a fraction of laws proposed by legislators get a public hearing, let alone receive a floor vote or get passed into law,” Hebl continued. “Sensible legislation can and does stall if the party in power – be it Republicans or Democrats – refuses to act on it. LRB-0151 allows citizens to bypass partisan inaction and take their case straight to the people of Wisconsin.”

Proposing a law or constitutional amendment would take signatures equaling 6% and 8%, respectively, of the total vote in the most recent gubernatorial election. If voters approve citizen-led legislation, it cannot be repealed or amended by the legislature for two years after it goes into effect. After that two year period, the law can only be changed with two-thirds majorities in both the State Assembly and State Senate. Any law passed by the people of Wisconsin is also not subject to a veto from the Governor.

“If legislators are unable or unwilling to consider legislation that serves the public interest, there ought to be a mechanism for the citizens of this state to introduce that themselves.” Hebl concluded.