

# Assembly votes to send Evers bill changing absentee voting regulations for nursing homes

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The Assembly today voted 60-38 along party lines to send to Gov. Tony Evers' a bill that would change regulations on absentee voting in nursing homes and residential care facilities.

The bill would require election administrators to provide notice of the dates and times when special voting deputies will be visiting the home or facility. They would also have to provide notices to residents' relatives upon request.

The bill would also make it a Class I felony for an employee of an assisted care facility to influence a resident's vote choices or intention to apply for an absentee ballot or cast a ballot.

Bill author Cindi Duchow, R-Town of Delafield, said the bill would help make sure those in retirement homes and assisted living situations have the right to vote and can get the help they need.

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"This says that our special voting deputies are going to come in and help you vote," Duchow said. "This is not for people who are incompetent, this is for people who possibly cannot hold a pen, maybe their eyesight is so bad they can't read the ballot and someone has to help them, because let's be honest, the font is pretty small."

But Rep. Mark Spreitzer, D-Beloit, called the bill "insidious," adding Republicans have been making "wild and outlandish" claims ahead of the November 2020 election.

“There’s no question that this is part of a national move by Republicans to undermine elections,” Spreitzer said. “These bills will make it harder for Wisconsinites who are elderly or disabled to vote.”

He added the Legislature should not presume those in nursing homes or long-term care facilities are not capable of making their own voting decisions without legislation. “But that is exactly what this bill would do,” he said.

“These bills are actively hostile to voting, to voters and the right to vote itself,” he added. “I will not be part of Republican efforts to undermine our democracy.”

See the bill here:

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/proposals/sb205>