

Milwaukee County Clerk Christenson: Testifies in opposition to election bills before Senate committee

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MILWAUKEE – County Clerk George Christenson [testified](#) before the Wisconsin State Senate Committee on Elections, Election Process Reform and Ethics, in opposition to Senate Bills [207](#), [210](#), and [213](#).

“Wisconsin’s elections are a great example of our proud tradition of good, honest, and transparent government,” said Clerk Christenson. “Despite the pandemic, all 72 Wisconsin counties conducted free, accurate, and secure elections in November. There are over thirty election law reform bills currently introduced at the State Legislature. Like the four heard at yesterday’s hearing, most of these bills, if passed, would have negative consequences on Wisconsin elections—including voter disenfranchisement and voter suppression.”

Senate Bill 207 would restrict local election officials from applying for and accepting any donation or grant from an individual or nongovernmental entity for election administration, except under specific circumstances. The bill also restricts who can serve as a poll worker.

Senate Bill 210 mandates that observation areas not be more than three feet from tables where a person may register to vote at a polling place. This modifies existing law which provides municipal clerks, chief inspectors, and boards of canvassers latitude to designate observation areas of not less than 3 feet nor more than 8 feet based on the space constraints of polling locations across the state.

Senate Bill 213 allows any voter to bypass filing a complaint against a local election official with the Wisconsin Elections Commission and immediately file a lawsuit so long as they live within the area covered by any office on the ballot for that election.

“Some of the provisions in these bills are just not practical and downright draconian,” said Clerk Christenson. “They will undoubtedly open up election officials to frivolous lawsuits that would be a drain on precious local resources and taxpayer dollars. What local citizen is going to be willing to work the polls if they can be sued on a whim? I hope to work in a bipartisan fashion with Legislative leadership on bills that would truly improve our election process.”

Clerk Christenson will continue to advocate for legislation that protects the right to vote and secures free and fair access to the ballot.