

Rep. Steffen: Legislation will guarantee absentee voting rights for voters with disabilities

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Madison, WI – Representative David Steffen (R-Howard) has announced he will introduce legislation next January to ensure the rights guaranteed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Voting Rights Act (VRA), and recent federal circuit court decisions are mirrored in Wisconsin state law. This legislation will protect the civil rights of Wisconsinites who have disabilities that make it difficult or impossible to leave their house to submit an absentee ballot.

“It’s past time to end the continued confusion surrounding the voting rights of Wisconsin voters with disabilities,” said Rep. Steffen. “The legislation will mirror ADA’s federal regulations and clarify any outstanding issues that have generated ongoing court involvement.”

Rep. Steffen will also address concerns relating to Wisconsin’s 1980s era absentee voting law by ensuring immediate family members of a voter are also eligible to assist with absentee ballot handling.

“I’m sure my legislative predecessors never intended to criminalize folks for walking a family member’s absentee ballot to the mailbox,” said Rep. Steffen. “This is an obvious miss between legislative intent and

the letter of the law.”

Rep. Steffen is working with Disability Rights-Wisconsin to ensure the provisions relating to the ADA and VRA meet their expectations. Expanded review and processing time is also being incorporated to ensure mail-in absentee ballot voters have sufficient time to receive, complete, and return their ballots. A draft of the legislation will be available for public review and input in 90 days.

For more information please contact Representative Steffen. He can be reached at (608) 266-5840 or by email at Rep.Steffen@legis.wisconsin.gov.