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Rep. Steineke: State Assembly passes election reform bills

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MADISON – State Representative Jim Steineke (R-Kaukauna) joined his Assembly colleagues today in passing a series of election reform bills to restore trust in Wisconsin's elections. The proposals come after the non-partisan Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) identified several discrepancies between state law and election administration during the 2020 elections.

"Voting is one of our most important and fundamental rights," said Rep. Steineke. "Wisconsin needs to ensure its state laws are being followed and its voters' voices are being heard."

In reviewing the 2020 elections, LAB found several instances of misleading guidance issued by the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC). In response, the bureau provided dozens of recommendations to ensure state elections remain safe and secure.

One example is Senate Bill 935, which clarifies the role of special voting deputies (SVDs). WEC previously provided guidance that kept SVDs out of nursing homes when they were supposed to help residents vote under state law. Other major bills included were reforms to tighten the rules around absentee ballots, prohibit the misuse of the "indefinitely confined" distinction, and require WEC to report election-related concerns and complaints to the state Legislature for review.

Several constitutional amendments also passed. One proposal, authored by Representative Steineke, clarifies that only U.S. citizens are eligible to vote in Wisconsin elections. This move comes after municipalities like New York City granted 800,000 non-citizens the right to vote. Another amendment, put forth by Representative Tyler August (R-Lake Geneva), would prevent governments from

accepting private funds to administer elections. Five major Wisconsin cities received grants in 2020 from billionaire Mark Zuckerberg to target voters and run their election operations. Constitutional amendments must pass the state legislature twice during two different legislative sessions and be approved by voters during a general election to become law.

“Some have lost confidence in Wisconsin’s elections,” Rep. Steineke concluded. “The reforms passed today will bring ease to the minds of these voters and let them be confident in the results of elections moving forward.”