

Rep. Ortiz-Velez: Passage of AB807-SB800-Corporation Council for the County Board

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Madison, WI- Rep. Ortiz-Velez, wants to thank the following people for the Passage of AB807-SB800- Corporation Council for the County Board. Rep. Nate Gustafson and Milwaukee County Supervisor Patti Logsdon and all the Co-authors and Sponsors.

AB807, is so important to good governance to our State. Across Wisconsin, county boards rely heavily on their corporation counsel for day-to-day legal advice. In 12 counties the corporation counsel represents the administration as well as the county board, creating an inherent conflict when the county board needs independent, unbiased legal guidance.

This bill auto creates, the office of the board counsel in any county that employs a corporation counsel and that has a county executive. In Wisconsin, this would apply to the following counties, Brown, Dane, Fond du Lac, Kenosha, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Portage, Racine, Washington, Waukesha, and Winnebago. This new corporation counsel, would serve at the pleasure of the county board, provide advice and legal services only the county board, and would be appointed by the County Board. AB807/SB800, does not require county boards to actually fill the positions, it simply gives them the authority to make that decision themselves.

Having to hire outside counsel when there is a conflict or other reason can cause a county a substantial amount of money and time. Most importantly, outside counsels are not subjected to Wisconsin State Statutes 59.42(2). Wisconsin State Statutes 59.42(2) lays out the responsibilities of Corporation Counsels at the County level. AB807/SB800, will give the County Board Supervisors in all 12 Counties, the

independent tools they need to make more informed decisions, independently of another branch of governance.