Text Message Absentee Ballot Tracking System Proposed

Madison, WI – State Representative David Steffen (R-Howard) and State Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara (R-Appleton) announced legislation to create a notification system for absentee voters in Wisconsin.

Under the proposal, the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) would send a text message to voters to confirm receipt of their ballot application and mailed absentee ballot by the clerk. The program would be voluntary, and all voter phone numbers would be kept confidential.

"Some voters are clearly hesitant to put their ballot in the mail," said Rep. David Steffen. "By adding a receipt confirmation text option, I believe many voters will feel more confident about our state's mail-in absentee ballot system."

Text message notifications have become commonplace in the private sector for nearly every service, including appointments, home deliveries, and travel updates. The bill authors believe this system will be easily and broadly accepted by the public around election time.

"This commonsense measure will give folks the ability to request their ballot with the assurance it was received and more easily track its progress," said Sen. Cabral-Guevara. "Any way we can make simple improvements to the process will help build more confidence in our elections."

The proposed ballot receipt confirmation system would be an added feature to the existing MyVote platform maintained and administered by WEC. As a result, this proposed program would only cost $10,000-$30,000 per year after its initial implementation, which is estimated to cost $25,000. "I don't think there is an easier, less expensive, more impactful way to enhance the public's confidence in our elections," said Steffen.

For more information please contact Representative Steffen or Senator Cabral-Guevara. Their offices can be reached at Rep.Steffen@legis.wisconsin.gov or Sen.Cabral-Guevara@legis.wisconsin.gov.

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