



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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## **Rep. Kitchens Approves Constitutional Amendment on Election of Chief Justice**

**Madison** – State Representative Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) today approved a constitutional amendment to allow state Supreme Court justices to elect their chief justice for a two-year term. Currently, seniority is used as the sole criteria. This amendment would shift the selection process to involve input of all seven of the Supreme Court justices providing for a more democratic approach to running the state’s highest court.

“Just because someone has the most seniority, does not necessarily make them the most qualified to hold a certain position. This resolution allows for the justices themselves to determine their chief justice,” said Rep. Kitchens. “This is not a novel concept for state supreme courts. Wisconsin would join 23 other states that use peer selection for their chief justice.”

A 2011 poll by 20/20 Insight Polling clearly illustrated that this legislation is supported by the people of Wisconsin with 62 percent of those polled in favor of the proposal.

“The polling data is clear, this legislation is something people want,” said Rep. Kitchens. “And ultimately, voters will decide whether or not to approve this change to the constitution.”

In order to amend the state constitution, two subsequent legislatures must pass the same resolution and voters must approve the change in a statewide referendum.

“This is democracy in action,” said Rep. Kitchens. “I look forward to bringing merit to the selection of the chief justice.”

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