



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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## **Rep. Katsma Votes to Approve Constitutional Amendment on Election of Chief Justice**

**Madison...** State Representative Terry Katsma (R–Oostburg) voted today to approve an amendment to the Wisconsin Constitution to allow the state’s Supreme Court justices to elect their own chief justice.

At present, seniority is the sole criterion used to determine which of the seven justices receives the post. This amendment would direct the Supreme Court to elect its leader every two years.

“This is about consistency in the Wisconsin court system,” said Rep. Katsma. “The Supreme Court appoints a chief judge for each of ten judicial administrative districts—yet it is not allowed to choose its own chief justice. The judicial branch of government is co-equal to the legislature and should have the same right to elect its own leadership.”

Passage of the measure today by the Assembly completes the second step required for amending the state constitution; the amendment has now been adopted by two successive Wisconsin legislatures. Wisconsin voters will have the final say in accepting or rejecting the amendment in a statewide referendum in April.

“There are 23 other states that elect their chief justice in a merit-based peer selection process,” Katsma continued. “This is something people want, and it reflects core democratic principles. This is what democracy looks like.”

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*Rep. Katsma represents the 26<sup>th</sup> Assembly District which includes the cities of Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls; the villages of Adell, Oostburg, Random Lake and Cedar Grove; and the towns of Lima, Holland, Sherman and Wilson. Katsma serves as the Vice-Chair of the Committee on Financial Institutions and as a member of the committees on Consumer Protection, Housing and Real Estate, Ways and Means and Workforce Development.*