



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**For Further Information Contact:**

November 28, 2008

Representative Frederick P. Kessler  
608.266.5813

## End Frontloading; Return Presidential Primary to its Rightful Position

*Kessler proposes returning presidential primary to spring general election ballot*

MADISON - In an effort to shorten the lengthening cycle of presidential politics, Representative Frederick P. Kessler (D-Milwaukee) proposes pushing back the date of Wisconsin's presidential preference primary and returning it to its traditional position coinciding with the spring general election.

"With states across the map jockeying to be among the first few who cast ballots in the nomination of the parties' presidential candidates, we have seen the length of our presidential elections grow to nearly an entire year," Kessler stated. "Wisconsin should make a statement against frontloading and reclaim our conventional date."

Despite the historic position of the primary on the same ballot as the spring general election, Wisconsin legislators have participated in the frontloading of primaries by moving Wisconsin's primary forward in recent years. In 1996, the date was moved to mid-March, only to return to the early-April date in 2000. Prior to the 2004 election, the date was moved to its current late-February date, where it has remained the past two cycles.

"In the 2008 election the conventional wisdom erroneously argued that even the February 19<sup>th</sup> primary would be irrelevant because the nominees would be decided by Super Tuesday in early February. However, the contested races were still occurring in April, as the nominating contests saw competitive primaries and caucuses in all 50 states," Kessler explained.

"While some may say that a later primary date somehow diminishes the voice of Wisconsin voters, it is also important to remember that Wisconsin already receives much more attention from presidential candidates than most states do due to our status as a general election battle ground state."

Holding the presidential primary with the spring general election would also likely increase voter turnout for the non-partisan general election. Wisconsin voters turn out in higher numbers based on percentage of voter participation in the presidential primaries than most states. In contrast, turnout for the spring general election has tended to be substantially lower since the change.

Local governments would also be able to save money if the presidential primary and spring general elections were rejoined by only holding one spring election if there are not separate local primaries on the February ballot in their jurisdiction.

###