



# LEAH VUKMIR

## STATE Senator

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For Immediate Release

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### **Senate Approves Plan For Bipartisan Elections & Ethics Commissions**

MADISON, Wis. -- The Wisconsin state Senate passed a bill Friday to replace the Government Accountability Board with two equally bipartisan commissions, an ethics commission and an elections commission.

“Passage of this bill is a victory for the integrity of Wisconsin’s elections,” said the bill’s author, state Sen. Leah Vukmir, R-Wauwatosa. “Equal representation of Republican and Democrat appointees will guarantee balanced, transparent and objective commissions.”

The elections and ethics commissions will comprise six members each. Both commissions will have a Senate Majority Leader appointee, a Senate Minority Leader appointee, an Assembly Speaker appointee and an Assembly Minority Leader appointee. The elections commission will have two clerks selected by the governor, from a pool nominated by the two political parties. The ethics commission will have two retired judges chosen in the same manner. Commission members will serve staggered five-year terms.

Agreement on the commissions’ makeup came after negotiations within the Senate Republican caucus. Vukmir pushed hard in the talks to prevent specifically requiring that judges sit on the commissions.

“My goal has always been to have the largest pool of qualified candidates considered to sit on these commissions,” Vukmir said. “However, this compromise still accomplishes what we set out to do from the start by creating a bipartisan watchdog. As an elected official, you don’t always get what you want, but we are getting what we need with the final version of this bill -- reform to a broken agency.”

The Government Accountability Board needed major structural reform. This was evidenced by its overt political agenda, the endless list of errors the Legislative Audit Bureau discovered and the fact that the GAB’s staff was virtually unsupervised.

“Wisconsin’s so-called ‘nonpartisan’ watchdog was nothing more than an attack dog for the board’s liberal agenda,” Vukmir said. “Wisconsinites deserve a governmental watchdog that doesn’t discriminate or chase after them merely because they exercise their First Amendment rights.”

The bill moves to the Assembly floor for approval Monday, Nov. 16, and then to Gov. Scott Walker’s desk. Once signed by the governor, it would take effect on June 30, 2016. This will allow the current board to administer the 2016 spring elections and coordinate ballot access for the November 2016 general election.

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