
Voter ID bill approved by Rep. senators

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Although the 19 Republican state senators approved the Voter ID bill Thursday, they cannot pass it until they have a 20-vote quorum because of its fiscal impact.

The bill also passed beyond a point where it can be amended, which is a problem for Senate Democrats who strongly oppose the bill.

"This legislation is nothing more than a voter suppression measure," state Sen. Fred Risser, D-Madison, who is currently somewhere in Illinois, said in a statement. "It will have a significant negative affect on the ability of many individuals, seniors and people with disabilities to vote."

However, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Elections state Sen. Mary Lazich, R-New Berlin, said it was a major step forward in elections practices.

"Ensuring integrity of elections is of utmost importance in our democracy," Lazich said in a statement. "Requiring voters to show photo identification is a reasonable step and one that is constitutional."

Dane County Board Supervisor and UW-Madison student Analiese Eicher, one of the most active opponents of the bill, said the fact that Democratic senators will not be able to amend the bill and have their input is a major setback. Eicher said she was hoping there would at least be an exception for student IDs in the bill, but the Republicans did not consider it.

However, Eicher said she understands why the Democratic senators cannot be there to work on the Voter ID bill.

"Would I love to have our senators here speaking ... against voter ID—if not against, then for the inclusion of student IDs?

Yes," Eicher said. "But at the same time, I appreciate the fact that they aren't here."