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February 13, 2024
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BILL PREVENTING LAST-MINUTE CLOSURES OF POLLING SITES HEADS TO GOVERNOR

Bipartisan measure protects our right to vote with Spring primary elections days away

MADISON, WI... With the Spring primary elections just days away, bipartisan legislation protecting our right to vote by preventing local officials from closing polling places at the last minute with little to no public notice heads to the Governor's desk after passing the State Senate today.

State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere), co-sponsor of the proposal with State Rep. Shae Sortwell, said the measure would guard against stealth municipal closures of polling sites, which make it difficult for voters, and in some cases prevents them from casting their ballots.

“In the 2020 Spring Primary, the City of Green Bay closed all but two polling places at the eleventh hour,” Sen. Jacque said. “Unprecedented long lines and the lack of efficient public notice kept many waiting to vote past midnight, while others were unable to turn in a ballot or could not make it to their proper polling location on time.”

Sen. Jacque said that under the bill:

- A municipality may close no more than 50% of its polling locations unless voted on by its legislative body more than 30 days prior to an election, and after a public hearing on the proposed discontinuation. The municipality is required to provide proper notice to the public in accordance with public notice law.
- The majority of the members-elect of the governing body may also make a finding of emergency. If both the majority of the members-elect of the governing body and the municipal clerk approve the emergency closure, the municipal clerk must take certain steps to ensure that the public is notified about these changes, including posting the notice on line or in a local newspaper, well ahead of election day.

“These steps will help make sure that the public is not taken by surprise in the event a polling location closes,” Sen. Jacque said. “Potential voters will be better prepared to go to their proper polling location and submit their vote on time.”

Sen. Jacque said he hoped the Governor would soon sign the measure ([Assembly Bill 298/Senate Bill 366](#)) into law.

Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin's First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.