



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Area legislators introduce legal notices bill

MADISON, Wis. – Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) and Sen. Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) have introduced legislation that intends to help smaller community newspapers with bringing in additional revenue and to make government operations more transparent for state residents.

Under current state law, a newspaper must meet certain criteria in order for it to be considered eligible to receive compensation for publishing legal notices.

However, there are many communities in Wisconsin that do not have their own hometown newspaper that can fulfill all of those requirements. The bill being brought forward by Rep. Kitchens and Sen. Cowles lays out specific guidelines that provide these publications with more opportunities to be compensated for printing notices.

Furthermore, the legislation takes advantage of modern technology by requiring all newspapers to publish their printed legal notices on their websites. The legal notices section must be made available to the public at no cost.

“Because of the internet, people’s reading habits have changed over the past several decades, with most readers now going online to get their news,” Rep. Kitchens said. “Because of this transformation, we must also adapt to make sure the public can better follow along with what their elected officials are doing. We believe a more transparent government is a better government.”

“When Representative Kitchens brought this idea to me, the importance of this bill was evident to ensure that government transparency is brought into the modern era,” Sen. Cowles added. “I’d like to thank Representative Kitchens for his efforts to find ways to get local legal notices in front of more Wisconsinites, and I look forward to working with him on this bill.”

The legislation was drafted in consultation with, and is supported by, the Wisconsin Newspaper Association.

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