



# Jeremy Thiesfeldt

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 52<sup>nd</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Hariah Hutkowski

Phone: 608-266-3156

## **Rep. Thiesfeldt's WRS Bill Heads to Governor's Desk**

*SB 134/AB 156 Strengthens the Wisconsin Retirement System*

**Madison** – Today, Senate Bill 134 (SB 134), authored by Rep. Thiesfeldt (R-Fond du Lac), was concurred in by the Assembly unanimously. This bill will make it easier for municipalities to participate and transition into Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS).

“This common sense and simple change to WRS will strengthen the program. It is a valuable tool for the 9 cities, 140 villages and almost all townships in Wisconsin that do not utilize the WRS system. I’m grateful for the unanimous support throughout the process. SB 134 allows all non-WRS municipalities a pathway to a legitimate, fair, and fiscally responsible route of offering WRS benefits to their employees,” Rep. Thiesfeldt stated.

SB 134 would not force a community to join the WRS. It provides municipalities interested in participating in WRS the option to join incrementally by applying the benefit to newly hired employees while allowing current employees to finish their careers under their existing retirement plan. In addition, amendments were added to the bill allows for a one-time decision by current employees to be included if they desire to be included in the “new hire” pool.

Rep. Thiesfeldt continued, “Non-WRS communities find it difficult to recruit qualified candidates with Wisconsin municipal experience. Candidates that have worked elsewhere for any fair amount of time under WRS will shy away from applying for jobs at non-WRS municipalities, and many candidates simply withdraw after discovering this fact, thus diminishing potential applicant pools.”

Additionally, due to revenue caps and the corresponding initial conversion cost to WRS it is impractical, if not nearly impossible, to make the full conversion. Current law requires a switch to WRS with 100% participation of the municipal employee workforce at the time of the decision.

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*Serving the communities of Fond du Lac, Oakfield, Byron, Empire, Taycheedah, and the western half of Calumet township*