



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

October 13, 2017

Representative Rob Swearingen, Chair  
Assembly Committee on State Affairs  
State Capitol, Room 123 West  
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Representative Swearingen,

Please consider our request for a public hearing on Assembly Bill 344 by the Assembly Committee on State Affairs.

AB 344 would establish a process for individuals with special needs, including non-English speakers, those in need of sign language interpreters, and those who need materials in alternate formats to access the resources necessary to participate in public hearings and other meetings.

Yesterday, the Senate Committee on Labor and Regulatory Reform held a hearing on SB 275, drawing hundreds of members of Wisconsin's Latino community to testify. English was not the first language of many of those who wished to speak, yet no plan was in place to provide interpreters. Fortunately, other members of the public attending the hearing assisted, but there was a clear barrier for non-English speakers to participate. A similar hearing was held during the last legislative session on AB 450 in the Assembly Committee on Urban and Local Affairs, and the same problem occurred.

AB 344 would address this problem by ensuring interpreters or materials in alternate formats are available for those who need them. Our bill would break down language barriers and also provide accommodations for people with disabilities to better enable all of Wisconsin's residents to participate in the civic process and access their government.

If you have any questions or concerns about this proposal, we would be happy to meet with you to discuss them.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

Lisa Subeck  
State Representative  
78<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

JoCasta Zamarripa  
State Representative  
8<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

LaTonya Johnson  
State Senator  
6<sup>th</sup> Senate District

cc: Speaker Vos  
Democratic Leader Hintz