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January 13, 2020

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Rep. Mark Spreitzer Introduces Nomination Papers Reform Bill

MADISON- Today, State Representative Mark Spreitzer (D-Beloit) introduced LRB 0326, a proposal to reform the nomination papers process for ballot access in Wisconsin elections.

“As was highlighted by today’s news about the nomination paper process in the election for Milwaukee County Executive, Wisconsin’s nomination papers process can be a burdensome and confusing process that even candidates with good intentions can run afoul of,” Rep. Mark Spreitzer said. “This proposal recognizes and affirms the importance of the process while also recognizing when that process has gotten in the way of voters’ preferences. This proposal implements a number of changes that modernize and clarify the nomination papers process.”

First, the proposal allows nomination paper signers and circulators to sign or circulate for multiple candidates for the same office. Many Wisconsinites want to have more candidates on the ballot, especially in primaries and non-partisan elections where voters may like more candidates than they can ultimately vote for, but cannot make up their minds early in the process.

Next, this bill adjusts the total number of signatures that a candidate is required to obtain for certain offices. For Secretary of State, State Treasurer, and County Executive in counties with more than 750,000 residents, the total is reduced to 1,000 signatures. Candidates for President of the United States who are not selected by the Presidential Preference Selection Committee are required to obtain 250 signatures in each of Wisconsin’s Congressional districts for a total of 2,000 signatures – the same as for Governor of Wisconsin or United States Senate – reduced from 8,000 signatures under current law.

Finally, under LRB 0326, the circulator certifies to the best of their knowledge that signers are electors and that the residences given are accurate, rather than swearing to the total accuracy of what another person has signed. This stills allow for prosecution of intentional fraud, while ensuring the role of the circulator is to help the elector understand what they are signing.

“It is important that we continue to have a ballot access process here in our state that forces candidates to gather support from their fellow Wisconsinites without being overly technical. This proposal will help ensure the process is clearer for candidates and voters,” Rep. Spreitzer said.

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