



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN
EDUCATION FUND**

122 State Street, #201A
Madison, WI 53703-2500

Phone: (608) 256-0827
lwwwisconsin@lwwwi.org

<http://www.lwwwi.org>

June 9, 2011

To: Assembly Committee on Election and Campaign Reform

Re: LRB-2196/1 Elections Process and Election Technology Task Force

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposal to create a task force on the elections process and election technology. The League of Women Voters nationwide believes elections should be secure, accurate, recountable, accessible and transparent. We also believe elections should be accountable and efficiently administered. Although we opposed the new voter identification requirements, we appreciate that this proposal seeks to assess the process and develop recommendations for improvements.

That said, we have a number of questions and concerns about the proposal:

1. The LRB states the task force shall consist of 11 members, including: 3 each from the Assembly and Senate election committees, 2 members “who have expertise in electronic voting system technology,” and apparently 2 or 3 representing the governor and attorney general, although this is not immediately clear. We recommend clarifying the language. We also recommend including task force members who represent voters, and the League would be happy to provide such a representative.
2. The task force members with expertise in electronic voting system technology should be independent, non-industry representatives who do not stand to benefit from the selection of a particular system.
3. The legislation does not specify that any election officials be included. Surely the task force needs the expertise of at least one state election official and one local election official, as these individuals can contribute the perspective of hands-on experience in running elections that no one else can provide.
4. The task force needs reliable information on which to base its recommendations. Its work should include a systematic evaluation of the February and April 2012 elections. In addition the bill should specify that the task force will hold at least two public hearings before making recommendations.
5. The legislation directs the task force to evaluate how the voter ID requirements affect the elections process and to make recommendations for changes in the process, including election day registration (EDR). Election day registration is popular with Wisconsin voters and has had virtually no problems over the years. If the task force finds that the new ID requirements interfere with EDR and cannot document any improvement in election integrity, we hope the recommendation will be to eliminate the ID requirements, not election day registration.
6. It does not make sense to create a new task force to study and recommend the next generation of electronic voting system technology for the state when we already have the nonpartisan Government Accountability Board, which works closely with local election officials and advocates for the disabled. This seems like a duplication of government effort that can only be explained by partisanship.
7. Currently Wisconsin only allows the use of electronic voting machines that are certified at the national level. Do the authors of this legislation think the state should break with this practice, if it is allowed to? If so, how would this help ensure trust in our elections?
8. The legislation directs the task force to report its recommendations no later than November 1, 2012. That is too close to a major election. News of the report is likely to cause confusion for voters and impair the open and orderly election process for which Wisconsin is known.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and suggestions for this task force.