

# Wisconsin County Clerks Association

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## The WCCA opposes AJR-48

AJR-48 proposes to eliminate the office of state treasurer. At first glance, this piece of legislation may look like a common-sense way to streamline state operations. After more careful reflection, however, it appears to be a consolidation of power that dilutes citizens' influence in their government with no guaranteed fiscal benefits.

### **1. Questionable Cost Savings**

- Work performed in the State Treasurer's office wasn't eliminated; it was merely shifted to other state personnel. ***In fact, 5.95 positions related to the unclaimed property program were transferred to the Department of Financial Institutions. Employees – and the salaries and benefits associated with them – are not necessarily reduced by eliminating the office.***
- Oftentimes, appointees who perform the same managerial work are paid more than elected officials. These questions have not been addressed, nor has hard data been supplied, to support the claims of cost savings. In fact, as of late August there is no fiscal note associated with AJR-48 whatsoever.

### **2. AJR-48 consolidates power**

- The wise authors of Wisconsin's constitution created a divided government that provided checks and balances not only *between* branches of government, but also *within* the individual branches.
- Regardless of which party holds each elected office, the state treasurer is an integral part of the delicate balance of power within the executive branch. Transferring duties to personnel appointed by, and/or overseen by, the governor's office creates a disconcerting consolidation of power that has the potential to compromise fair and transparent government.

### **3. Less Citizen Representation/Access**

- Adoption of this measure would deprive Wisconsinites of an independently elected voice in their state government, further removing citizens from those who are charged with serving them.
- Elected officials are held accountable by their constituents through the voting process. Appointed employees have no such accountability to the will of the majority; they are only accountable to a select few. This paves the way for less responsive and responsible government.

# **Wisconsin County Clerks Association**

*President - Kathy Brandt, Marinette County*

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## **Resolution 2013-1**

## **Resolution Opposing 2013 AJR-48**

TO THE WISCONSIN COUNTY CLERKS ASSOCIATION:

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Legislature is considering 2013 Assembly Joint Resolution 48, which is the first consideration of a constitutional amendment to delete the offices of secretary of state and state treasurer from the state constitution; and

WHEREAS, Assembly Joint Resolution 48 would significantly alter the composition of state government by eliminating important checks and balances that occur within the executive branch, open the door to increased patronage for personnel that perform management roles, usurp the principle of divided government where it's needed most, make government less accountable, undo 165 years of history and wisdom of the Wisconsin Constitution, and deprive Wisconsinites of two independently elected voices in their state government; and

WHEREAS, little to no costs savings are achieved when work is merely shifted from an elected office to a non-elected office when there is no decrease in the overall workload, and people are being stripped of their voice in who performs those important functions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin County Clerks Association opposes 2013 Assembly Joint Resolution 48 and any other attempt by the Wisconsin Legislature to consolidate power and limit the people's voice in their government;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a designee of the WCCA is directed to send a copy of this resolution to each member of the Wisconsin Legislature, the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, the Secretary of State, the State Treasurer, the Wisconsin Counties Association, and the Wisconsin County Constitutional Officers Association.

Dated this 24<sup>th</sup> day of September 2013.