



1-844-DIS-VOTE
www.disabilityvote.org

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Statement of Support for SB 937– Indefinitely Confined Voters

Wisconsin's indefinitely confined statute has been on the books for decades and provides an important safeguard to ensure that many voters who are disabled, frail, or have a physical illness can cast a ballot.

SB 937 updates the provisions in Wisconsin law for indefinitely confined voters; the Assembly companion bill is AB 1002. Disability and aging advocates listed below support the bill, as amended. We have worked with the bill author and committee members on the bill which includes a number of helpful provisions, including the following:

- The bill provides a way for indefinitely confined voters to prove their identity in a manner that accommodates their disability.
- The bill specifies that a voter who fails to cast and return an absentee ballot in spring or general election (*current law states any election*) will receive notification that they will be removed from the rolls unless they notify the clerk. Turnout among all voters is lower for primary elections and this change would prevent indefinitely confined voters from having to reapply to maintain their status if they did not vote in a primary election.
- Eligibility for indefinitely confined status will include voters of all ages who have a disability, physical illness, or frailty. The bill clarifies eligibility by removing "age" alone as a criteria for eligibility.

Ultimately, we support this bill because it is critically important to maintain this vital protection for indefinitely confined voters. While not all of the changes we supported were included, the bill was amended to address the most serious concerns advocates raised at the hearing. An additional

amendment which we very strongly support will be offered on the floor to further improve the bill by clarifying the definition of disability in the bill and aligning it with the language used by the Social Security Administration.

We encourage policy makers to join the undersigned in supporting the amended version of SB 937, including the amendment which will be offered on the floor, and to support amending AB 1002, the Assembly companion bill.

Access to Independence

Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc.

Disability Rights Wisconsin

Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc

InControl Wisconsin

Independence First

League of Women Voters of Wisconsin

Mental Health America of Wisconsin

Milwaukee County Commission on Aging

NAMI Wisconsin

National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Wisconsin

Options for Independent Living

People First Wisconsin

Save IRIS

Souls to the Polls Milwaukee

Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

The Arc-Dane County

Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network

Wisconsin Association of Benefit Specialists

Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers, Inc.

Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired

Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition