

To: Madison Election Advisory Committee
Date: May 3, 2009
From: Paul Malischke
Subject: AB-39, bill for satellite locations for voting before Election Day

MEAC and the City of Madison should consider evaluating and perhaps endorsing AB-39, which would allow satellite sites for voting before Election Day. These sites would allow voter registration and in-person absentee balloting as we now have at the clerk's office. Satellite sites could also become early voting sites in the future if early voting is authorized by the legislature.

Currently, each municipality is allowed only one site for voting before Election Day. This results in long lines, and unequal access compared to voters in small municipalities.

Bill AB-39 has been introduced by Milwaukee Representative Fred Kessler, and had a recent public hearing. AB-39 leaves most parameters up to the municipality, such as number of locations, hours, and dates. However, MEAC may wish to have the bill amended as follows:

1) Amend the bill to allow a municipality to designate satellites that will serve parts of the municipality. To require that every satellite serve every voter is unnecessary and logistically difficult, as many different ballot styles would have to be stocked.

Change section 33, page 18 to add the underlined text.

Section 33: 6.77 (1) An elector may vote only at the polling place for his or her residence designated by the governing body or board of election commissioners of the municipality where the elector resides, at a satellite absentee voting station designated for the elector's ward under s. 6.873 (1) in the municipality where the elector resides, or at a nursing home, qualified retirement home, or qualified community-based residential facility where absentee voting is conducted under s. 6.875 (6) in the municipality where the elector resides.

2) Delete an unnecessary restriction on possible locations

Section 42, Page 23, line 18 to 20 currently reads "*The municipal clerk or board of election commissioners shall not designate a location as a satellite absentee voting station if there is a charge for the municipality to use the location.*" This will unnecessarily make it harder to find suitable locations for satellites. Remove this clause.

3) Amend the bill to specifically require satellites to provide a ballot-marking device (such as the Automark in use at many Wisconsin polling places), using language similar to existing 5.25 (4) (a) "*The board shall ensure that the voting system used at each polling place will permit all individuals with disabilities to vote without the need for assistance and with the same degree of privacy that is accorded to nondisabled electors voting at the same polling place.*"

The bill history is at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2009/data/AB39hst.html>