

To: Assembly Committee on Election and Campaign Reform

Date: June 9, 2011

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Subject: Task force on Election Best Practices

AB-170 proposes an election task force. The proposal has three flaws.

- 1) Membership is unbalanced. It ignores such groups as voters, pollworkers, and local and state election officials and administrators.
- 2) It lacks an adequate mission statement or goals by which to evaluate effectiveness.
- 3) The task list ignores significant current issues.

Please consider these specifications as a basis for a substitute amendment for forming an elections task force.

Membership

Eleven to thirteen members shall be appointed by the Joint Legislative Council, and shall include

- The chairperson and ranking minority member (or designees) of the assembly and senate committees whose jurisdiction includes the election laws. (4 members)
- The Attorney General or designee. (1 member)
- Three to four election officials or election administrators. (3 to 4 members)
- Three to four citizen members whose primary election interest is voting, or are local elected officeholders, all with working knowledge or experience in either voter registration, voting technology, computer security, polling place activities, election litigation, or political science. (3 to 4 members)

The chair of the senate elections committee, or designee, shall act as chair of the task force; and the chair of the assembly elections committee shall act as vice-chair of the task force.

Mission *(adapted from a 2008 Maryland task force)*

The mission of the task force shall be to evaluate recent election events and draw from these events solutions and recommendations to assure that future Wisconsin elections will:

- Both engage and accommodate full participation of the Wisconsin electorate;

- Assure a reliable and accurate representation of the public will, embodied by the vote;
- Fairly provide all legally eligible residents of Wisconsin the benefit of democratic participation in their government; and
- Preclude abuses of the process that may cloud or undermine the legitimacy of the election's outcome.

Tasks

The task force shall evaluate and offer recommendations concerning these specific items:

- Election night reporting of results.
- Security of voted and unused ballots and voting systems.
- The implementation of 2011 Act 23.
- The next generation of electronic voting system technology.
- Use of electronic voter registration to achieve cost savings and improve accuracy, and facilitate HAVA checks. (See <http://tinyurl.com/OLVRWI>)
- Improving and guaranteeing the accuracy of automated tabulators, by evaluating pre-election testing, and post-election audits of the vote count via hand counts.
- Improving the recount process. The Legislative Audit Bureau shall conduct a review of the minutes of the Supreme Court recount and report to the task force.

The task force shall conduct at least two public hearings. The joint legislative council shall provide staff services to the task force. The task force shall report by December 31, 2012.