



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**FREDERICK P. KESSLER**

WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

12TH DISTRICT

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## **The Time is Now for Vote-by-Mail Elections**

*Representative Kessler requests legislation to change elections in Wisconsin*

MADISON - State Representative Frederick P. Kessler announced legislation today that will propose a new system of eliminating polling places and voting by mail. "Wisconsin currently allows no-excuse voting," Kessler said, "the new Vote-by-Mail (VBM) program will expand voting opportunities to every registered voter in Wisconsin." The system aims to get more citizens voting. It will also give cities, towns and villages more time to count ballots and administer elections.

We have seen how the current system has many administrative problems. Those "glitches" have impaired citizen confidence in the current system. It is necessary to make changes to restore citizen confidence.

"The VBM system was enacted in Oregon in the late 1990's and since then the state has had a 10.5% higher voter turnout than the U.S. average. Kessler opined that the increased voter turnout could be because of voter satisfaction, more opportunity to study and think about the ballot, or just the convenience of voting from home and avoiding long lines at the polls. "Whatever the reason, increased participation in the electoral process is a good consequence" Kessler remarked.

The VBM system is expected to save the state about half of what it previously cost to run polling places. Votes would still be anonymous. Ballots are placed in a double envelope, the outside one is used to verify the voter's signature and ensure the votes are not fraudulent or coerced. The VBM system creates a paper trail in case of disputes, and there would be less incentive for last minute smear attacks on candidates" Kessler said.

Kessler continued, "The ballots would be mailed out to every registered voter in Wisconsin at least three weeks before the election, ensuring every voter has ample time to gather information on candidates and cast thoughtful votes. This also ensures higher voter turnout because no one would have to worry about getting to the polls in a snowstorm, finding a babysitter, or trying to vote during an already crammed lunch hour. Everyone can vote at their leisure so long as ballots mailed in are postmarked by 8:00 pm on Election Day. The local election's board or clerk's office would be open on Election Day from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm so registered voters could drop off their ballot in person, in lieu of mailing it in, and so new voters could still participate in same day registration.

"Even though there is no guarantee the ballot will not be lost or destroyed in the mailing process, or a ballot may not enter the machine and read properly, these problems will be rare and offset by the larger percentage of Wisconsinites who will be willing to take the time to vote because the voting process has been made easier and more convenient" concluded Kessler.

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