MARK GOTTLIEB

Speaker Pro Tempore
Wisconsin State Assembly

Testimony of Rep. Mark Gottlieb
Assembly Bill 152
Assembly Committee on Elections and Constitutional Law
March 22, 2007

Chair Albers and members: Thank you for holding this public hearing on Assembly Bill 152 (AB 152), relating to the method of election of village officers.

I introduced AB 152 at the request of a village clerk in my district. This bill gives villages the same flexibility that cities currently have regarding the decision to hold a spring primary election. In a letter she wrote to me she stated:

> *In February 2006, the Village of Grafton had 7 candidates running for three Village Board seats. Because there were more than 2 candidates for the available seats, we were required to hold a primary to narrow the field to 6 candidates.*
>
> *We had a total of 362 persons vote at the February 21, 2006 primary. The cost was over $10 per vote cast. That is a significant waste of taxpayer money. Had this legislation been "on the books" at that time, we would not have had to hold that election, saving the residents of the Village of Grafton over $3,800.*

Currently, villages hold caucuses to nominate candidates for the spring election unless the governing body of the village provides by a certain date that nomination papers will be used. If the village chooses to nominate candidates via nomination papers, they are required to hold a primary election when the number of candidates for an office exceeds twice the number of persons to be elected to that office.

Cities currently have the authority to opt out of holding a spring primary election, unless one of the following two cases applies:

1) Any city may provide by charter ordinance that whenever three or more candidates file nomination papers for a city office, a primary to nominate candidates for the office shall be held.
2) Whenever electors, equal to at least 10% of the vote for governor in the city at the last general election, file a timely petition with the city clerk requesting a primary, a primary to nominate candidates shall be held.

Assembly Bill 152 gives villages that do not nominate via caucus the same ability as cities to eliminate the effort and expense of holding a primary election as long as the same two conditions above are not met. On behalf of my constituent, I respectfully ask that the members of this committee support and take executive action on Assembly Bill 152.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 60TH DISTRICT

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