



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Bipartisan Bill Circulated to Modernize the Publication of Minutes

Madison, WI – Today, Rep. Jeremy Thiesfeldt (R-Fond du Lac), Rep. Fields (D-Glendale), Sen. Stroebel (R-Saukville) and Sen. Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) began circulating a bill to modernize the requirement for government entities to publish meeting minutes in local newspapers.

The proposed bill will allow municipalities, school districts, counties, and technical colleges to satisfy the legal requirements of publishing meeting minutes by posting them on a website and one public place. Current law generally requires meeting minutes to be placed in the local newspaper. Minutes are the records of previously conducted business meetings of legislative bodies. The bill would not change the requirement to print agendas and legal notices in the newspaper. This legislation would impact nearly all government entities statewide, but the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Public School district, and most townships are already exempt from this publication requirement.

Rep. Thiesfeldt stated, “This proposal will help standardize the publication of all minutes in our state. People will simply know they can find them on the specific governmental website.”

Sen. Stroebel said, "After discussions with local officials in my district, this bill will save thousands of dollars each year in needless publications of meeting minutes in newspapers while ensuring the information is available."

Having meeting minutes in one electronic searchable location on a website allows for greater access for everyone, not just newspaper subscribers, and cost savings for taxpayers through school districts, municipalities, tech colleges, and counties.

Sen. Taylor said, “In our digital age this is an unnecessary expense. As the times change, so should we, especially if it means saving local government money.”

This bill does not preclude an entity from continuing to spend taxpayer dollars on publishing meeting minutes in the local newspaper if they wish. If no website is available, minutes must continue to be published as the law currently requires. This allows more local control.

Rep. Fields concluded, “I don’t know anyone who keeps a stack of newspapers at home to reference minutes of proceedings. It is better to allow taxpayers to save money and have better and easier access to minutes.”

This proposal is supported by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association, School Administrators Alliance, Wisconsin League of Municipalities, Dane County Cities’ & Villages’ Association, the Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance and the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance.

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