



# SCOTT FITZGERALD

## SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Fitzgerald Statement on Call to Fix Special Elections Law**

**[Madison, WI]** Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau) released the following statement after the legislature was called into extraordinary session to address inconsistencies in Wisconsin's elections statutes:

"The bill and the substitute amendment that were called for today are necessary for a number of reasons.

"Since moving the September primary elections back to August to comply with the federal Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act, special elections statutes have not been sufficiently changed to ensure military and overseas voters have the same opportunity to participate in state elections. If Judge Reynolds' ruling stands, military voters seeking to vote in those elections may be disenfranchised. Clerks would likely not have adequate time to send out, and receive back, ballots from military & overseas voters.

"Furthermore, the Wisconsin Constitution still requires the Governor to call special elections to fill legislative vacancies. This bill and amendment simply clarify the timelines for elections when they are called and sets a date after which the regular election will be used to fill a vacancy. This eliminates the need for multiple elections in a short timeline, saving taxpayer dollars and avoiding voter confusion.

"We are also open to discussion on how much discretion a Governor should have and how much time should be allotted to call a special election. Senator Shilling introduced Senate Bill 782 in February that we will consider as part of this package of statutory fixes.

“Finally, it is important to note there are already declared candidates for the open legislative seats and the window for nomination papers begins on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Failure to act on this legislation will create a scenario in which four elections for two legislative seats overlap. This will be extremely complicated for the Elections Commission and county/municipal clerks to facilitate.

“I look forward to the public hearing on Wednesday, and plan to bring this legislation to the senate floor for a vote on April 4<sup>th</sup>.”

*Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau) represents the 13<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which covers portions of Dodge, Jefferson, Waukesha, Washington, Dane, and Columbia counties.*

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