



Date: February 13, 2020

To: Chair Tusler, Vice-Chair Sanfelippo, and Members of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

From: Robert Kellerman, Executive Director

Re: **AB 898** – the time for holding special primaries, **requiring those who register electronically or by mail to vote in person the first time they vote**, obtaining another person's marked absentee ballot, tampering with voting machines or ballots, and providing a penalty - Informational

The Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. (GWAAR) is a nonprofit agency committed to supporting the successful delivery of aging programs and services in our service area consisting of 70 counties (all but Dane and Milwaukee) and 11 tribes in Wisconsin. We are one of three Area Agencies on Aging in Wisconsin. We provide lead aging agencies in our service area with training, technical assistance, and advocacy to ensure the availability and quality of programs and services to meet the changing needs of older people in Wisconsin.

Thank you for this opportunity to share testimony on AB 898. My comments are specific to the section of the bill pertaining to “requiring those who register electronically or by mail to vote in person the first time they vote.”

Online voter registration and absentee voting are important options to ensure that older adults and people with disabilities who can't make it to their assigned voting location are still able to cast their ballots. Lack of transportation options, mobility issues, accessibility concerns at the polling site (lack of accessible parking spaces, concerns regarding accessible entrances and pathways, etc.), caregiving responsibilities, weather concerns, and health problems are some of the reasons why older voters and voters with disabilities choose or need to rely on absentee voting. **Requiring newly registered voters to vote in-person at their polling place the first time they vote in their new district may keep some older adults and people with disabilities from being able to cast their votes**, as for some the obstacles will be too great.

For many older adults and people with disabilities absentee voting is not a convenience voting method, it is the method of necessity. For this reason, **we recommend the proposal include a broad exemption for all voters with disabilities and older adults.**

Thank you for your consideration of these informational comments.

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