



Statewide Caregiver Call

April 27, 2021

2021 - 2023 State Budget

The last scheduled JFC budget hearing is tomorrow – ~~Wed. 4/28~~ from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Registration is now closed for the hearing.

The virtual public hearing will be available for the public to watch on WisconsinEye - <https://wiseye.org/>. Budget comments may be submitted by:

- Emailing budgetcomments@legis.wisconsin.gov,
- Filling out the online form at: <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomments/submit-comments>, or
- U.S. Mail to: Joe Malkasian, Room 305 East, State Capitol, Madison, WI 53702.

The budget comment email address and online portal are anticipated to only be available through April 28, so get your comments in soon! See the Joint Finance Committee 2021-2023 Biennial Budget Public Comment website -<https://legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomments/> for additional information.

JFC will begin holding committee meetings as they develop their own version of the budget. Goal is to complete the budget by 6/30/21.

Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) Aging Advocacy Online – 2021 – May 10th – 1-3 PM & May 12th – 1-2 PM

Registrations have now closed for Aging Advocacy Online. Approximately 175 participants covering 31 of the 33 Senate districts will be participating. **Local hosts are still needed for 16 of the 33 Senate districts for our May 12th legislative visits.**

Hosts can be ADRCs/aging units, senior centers, or other aging network partners. Hosting involves setting up and facilitating a virtual meeting on May 12 from 1:00-2:00 p.m. (using an online meeting platform of the host's choice) for district participants and the state legislators serving them. WAAN will provide all hosts with the names and contact information for their district participants and the four state legislators serving the district (one Senator and three Assembly Representatives). WAAN has notified all state legislators of the meeting date/time. Hosts will be asked to send the May 12th meeting invitation and link to district participants and their legislators. The host and participants will join at 1:00 p.m. and legislators will join at 1:30 p.m. WAAN will provide a brief host training (date/time to be determined) to help the hosts prepare to hold these legislative visits. **If you are willing to serve as a host on May 12th, please send your name, agency name, email address, phone number, and the Senate district you wish**

to host to Janet Zander, Advocacy and Public Policy Coordinator at: janet.zander@gwaar.org . Thank you!

For more information about Aging Advocacy Online – 2021 go to: <https://gwaar.org/aging-advocacy-online-2021>

Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness Survey

A group of organizations, including AARP, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging, the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, and the Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers, have recently organized to form a Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness in Wisconsin. The mission of the coalition is to engage diverse partners in reimagining how we can combat the root causes and adverse consequences of social isolation and loneliness among older adults and people with disabilities in our state.

You are receiving this email because the Coalition is now seeking involvement from the community, medical, social, advocacy, and provider networks throughout our state to combat the problems of social isolation and loneliness.

The Coalition is overseeing the launch of four specialized workgroups and we invite you to indicate your interest in this work by completing the following survey:

English: <https://www.surveymoz.com/s3/6251750/Partner-Engagement-F02782>

Spanish: <https://www.surveymoz.com/s3/6285902/F-02782-Spanish>

Russian: <https://www.surveymoz.com/s3/6285535/F-02782-Russian>

Hmong: <https://www.surveymoz.com/s3/6287865/F-02782-Hmong>

[View this email message in American Sign Language](#). If you need the full survey in American Sign Language or in an alternative format, you may make that request by contacting Carly Bieri at carly.bieri@wisconsin.gov.

Please share the survey with others you think might be interested. Thank you.

State Legislation

Elder Abuse Legislation

[SB17/AB 44](#) - Increased penalties for crimes against elder persons; restraining orders for elder persons; freezing assets of a defendant charged with financial exploitation of an elder person; sexual assault of an elder person; physical abuse of an elder person; and providing a penalty. Referred to Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety. (GWAAR is registered in support of this legislation.)

[SB18 /AB 43](#) - Expediting criminal proceedings when a victim or witness is an elder person and preserving the testimony of a crime victim or witness who is an elder person. Referred to Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety. (GWAAR is registered in support this legislation.)

[SB19/AB 46](#) - Financial exploitation of vulnerable adults. Referred to Committee on Financial Institutions and Revenue. (GWAAR has registered as “other” on this legislation due to concerns regarding acceptance issues related to financial Power-of-Attorneys.)

[SB20/AB 45](#) - Financial exploitation of vulnerable adults with securities accounts, violations of the Wisconsin Uniform Securities Law, granting rule-making authority, and providing a penalty. (GWAAR has registered as “other” on this legislation due to concerns regarding acceptance issues related to financial Power-of-Attorneys.)

Guardian Training Requirements

[SB 92/AB 100](#) Guardian training requirements - Establishes initial training requirements for guardians. (GWAAR is registered in support of this legislation.)

Elections Legislation – the following bills are of concern to aging/disability advocates:

SB 203 / AB 192: Secure delivery of absentee ballots

- Would limit options to obtain and return absentee ballots.
- Prohibits any individual from helping more than one non-family member to return their absentee ballot.
- Limits who can return a voter’s absentee ballot to the voter’s immediate family or legal guardian, with very limited exceptions.

SB 204/ AB 201 Absentee Ballot Applications

- Eliminates the option for indefinitely confined voters to receive absentee ballots automatically for every election.
- Would require all indefinitely confined voters to provide a photo ID with their absentee ballot request.
- Prohibits the WI Election Commission, clerks, and other groups from sending absentee ballot applications to all eligible voters; makes it a felony to mail absentee ballot applications to anyone who has not requested one.

What is an Indefinitely Confined Voter? If a voter has a hard time leaving their home to vote, due to age, illness, or disability, he/she may request an absentee ballot for every election and certify he/she is “indefinitely confined because of age, illness, infirmity, or disability”. An indefinitely confined voter is not required to show a Photo ID when voting by absentee ballot. *Instead the witness verifies the voter’s name and address “in lieu of providing identification. Wis Stats 6.87(4)(b)2*

SB 205 / AB 179 Absentee Voting in residential care facilities

- Would limit voting rights of nursing home and group home residents. If staff offered to provide a resident with assistance, this would be a felony.
- This bill would require the administrator of the facility to notify relatives of the residents as to when the special voting deputies will be coming to the facility to assist in the casting of absentee ballots.

SB 206/AB 180 Returning Absentee Indefinitely Confined Voter

- Would limit rights of voters who certify as “indefinitely confined”.
- Voters would be required to provide statements under oath.
- Voters under 65 would need to have their statements signed by their doctors. A false statement would be a felony.
- Voters would need to renew their status every two years. Currently, they receive an absentee ballot for every election for as long needed.

SB 207/AB 173 – private resources used for an election/appointment of poll workers

- Would restrict who can serve as a poll worker. Prohibits employees of an issue advocacy group from serving as poll workers. Example: could prohibit employees of groups who advocate for voting rights, or for people with disabilities. Wisconsin currently has a shortage of poll workers.
- Would prohibit municipalities from applying for or accepting donations or grant moneys for purposes of election administration.
 - Some municipalities have used donations and grant funding to address accessibility and curbside voting.
 - Grant funding was used to fund health and safety precautions during COVID.

SB 209/AB 177 Returning Absentee Ballots/ Ballot Drop Boxes

- Requires voters to either mail or drop off their absentee ballots at the permanent location of the clerk's office.
- Limits drop box locations to a location attached to the clerk's permanent office. Reducing drop box locations will limit options for nondrivers and other voters to return their absentee ballot.
- Sets standards for drop boxes including that they be tamper resistant, moisture-proof, and satisfy the accessibility requirements under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

SB 212/ AB 198 Defects on Absentee Ballot Certificates

- Prohibits a municipal clerk from correcting a defect on the completed absentee ballot certificate envelope. **Example:** *a witness for your absentee ballot forgets to complete their address. Currently the clerk may look up the address or contact the voter for information.*
- If there is a defect on the absentee ballot certificate envelope, the clerk must return the ballot to the voter and post a notification on the elector's voter information page on MyVote website.
- Concerns:
 - Many voters don't have internet or device to access MyVote; they would be unaware of the problem, and not able to correct it.
 - Mail is slow. There may not be time to return the ballot to the voter and for the voter to send it back by the deadline.

SB 214: re early canvassing of absentee ballots, combined polling places.

- Allows municipal clerks to start canvassing the absentee ballots the day before the election, which could be helpful for clerks.
- Authorizes any city, village, or town with a population of less than 35,000 to enter into an agreement to share a polling place with an adjacent community having a population of less than 35,000.

- Transportation is already a significant barrier for many voters, combining polling sites would only increase this challenge.

For more information about these bills and other disability voter rights issues, check out the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition at: <https://disabilityvote.org/>

Federal Updates

National advocacy efforts are currently focused on the federal fiscal year 2022 budget. Earlier this month President Biden released his “skinny budget” which contains some indication he may be proposing additional resources to provide relief to caregivers and families. It is not clear; however, which specific programs he is proposing funding increases for. A more full budget proposal is expected to be released in May, so stay tuned.

Meanwhile, specific members of Congress are urging their colleagues to support increased funding for Older Americans Act Title III programs, the Medicare State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), and the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). Watch for upcoming alerts to contact your federal U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson to help them understand the critical funding needs of your programs and the value your services bring to members of your communities.

Thank you.

Your partner in advocacy,



Contact:

[Janet Zander](#)

Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator

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Elder Law & Advocacy Center

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