



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN EDUCATION NETWORK

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To: Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules

Re: Rules for student ID cards for voting

As an organization that seeks to educate citizens about how to be prepared to vote, the League of Women Voters has been frustrated this fall by the inability to provide good information to students about whether their ID cards will be acceptable at the polls. The debate over student IDs should be cleared up soon, and the resolution should be one that offers students the maximum opportunity to vote allowable by law.

As key members of Wisconsin's current and future workforce, students at our colleges and universities – including our technical colleges – should have a voice in their government. Given that Wisconsin needs qualified workers as much as it needs jobs, students should be encouraged to participate in government by voting in elections. Unfortunately, students have been receiving a mixed message as to what kind of voting ID options are available to them.

Students from Wisconsin technical colleges should have the same opportunities to vote afforded their equals in the UW System and private colleges. Wisconsin technical college ID cards are secure, state-issued documents, and they should qualify as voting IDs if they are made to meet the requirements listed for student cards in 2011 Wisconsin Act 23.

The language of Act 23 states that student ID cards may be eligible for voting if they are issued by “an institution accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or by the board of nursing pursuant to s. 441.01(4) or, if not so accredited, is a nonprofit institution of higher education whose credits are accepted on transfer by not less than 3 institutions which are so accredited, on the same basis as if transferred from an institution so accredited.” Testimony from representatives of the Wisconsin Technical College System at the November 9, 2011 meeting of the Government Accountability Board outlined clearly how technical colleges fit this description. A representative of the University of Wisconsin System confirmed the transferability of technical college credits, noting that Madison Area Technical College is the primary source of transfer students into UW-Madison.

The six retired judges who serve on the nonpartisan Wisconsin Government Accountability Board have given these issues careful, independent review. They interpret 2011 Wisconsin Act 23 to include technical college ID cards. They also have twice reviewed the question of allowing colleges and universities to issue stickers to make their existing student cards acceptable for voting purposes, taking care to seek a solution that complies with the law while saving precious dollars for our institutions of higher education.

We urge you to uphold the decisions of the Government Accountability Board and give all students in Wisconsin institutions of higher education the same opportunity to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

Thank you.