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STATE REPRESENTATIVE ♦ 76th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony in favor of
Assembly Bill 268
January 28, 2014

Chairman Weininger and committee members thank you for holding a hearing on Assembly Bill 268. This bill assures that every citizen of Wisconsin has representation in their state legislature in a reasonable amount of time if their current Assembly Representative or Senator leaves office.

Prior to my election to the State Assembly, constituents of the 48th Assembly District were without a voice in the State Assembly for 138 days after Joe Parisi was elected Dane County Executive. Vacancies are something that impacts both political parties. When former Representative Scott Suder resigned on September 3 of last year, Representative Kulp was not sworn in until December 4. Thus, residents of the 69th Assembly district went without representation for 93 days. Wisconsinites should not lose their voice for such a length of time.

While current law requires a special election to fill the vacancy "as prompt as possible," AB-268 requires the Governor to call a special election within 60 days to fill a legislative vacancy that occurs before the second Tuesday in May of an even numbered year. Essentially, this proposal would write consistency and predictability into the statutes, so our constituents are ensured they will be represented in a timely fashion.

Every Wisconsinite, regardless of political ideology, deserves a voice in the legislature as well as an advocate in state government. We have the power to ensure that lengthy legislative vacancies no longer occur by passing Assembly Bill 268.

I hope I can count on your support and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have on this proposal.