



JIM OTT

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 23rd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 266-0486
District: (262) 240-0808
Toll-Free: (888) 534-0023
Rep.Ottj@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

Good Morning Madame Chairwoman and Committee Members. Thank you for hearing my testimony on Assembly Bill 420.

Most nomination papers, recall and referendum petitions have spaces for signers to include both their printed name and signature, along with their address and the date of signing. These papers are then submitted to the Government Accountability Board, which allows interested parties to challenge a signer for a variety of reasons, including cases in which the signer does not reside in the district for which the papers are being circulated or the signer is too young to vote.

It has come to my attention that current law does not require nomination papers, recall or referendum petitions to include the printed name of the signer, only the signature. In the event that a paper is circulated without spaces for names to be printed, the paper will only include a signature, which in many cases is unreadable. This makes challenging those signatures nearly impossible, since if the name is unreadable the challenger is left without any idea of who the signer actually is.

The Government Accountability Board's policy is to assume that a signature is valid unless proven otherwise. It is extremely difficult to prove a name is invalid if it cannot be read.

This bill requires that nomination papers, recall and referendum petitions include the legibly printed name as well as the signature of the signer, along with the address and date of signing as required by current law. This will ensure that those signing these papers are actually entitled to do so, and will make it easier to challenge those names that are not valid.

Thank you and I will be glad to answer any questions.