

Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

April 8, 2022

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE:

I am vetoing Senate Bill 937 in its entirety.

The bill would narrow the definition of indefinitely confined status for purposes of voting and create an unnecessary application for claiming indefinitely confined status separate from the absentee ballot application.

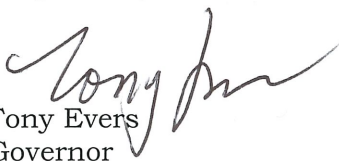
The right to vote is fundamental to our democracy; it should not be subject to the whim of politicians who do not like the outcome of an election. Elected officials should not be able to abuse their power to cheat or control the outcomes of our elections or to prevent eligible voters from casting their ballots. This legislation is among many that have been sent to my desk during this legislative session, each passed under the guise of needing to reform our election system because elected officials in this state have enabled disinformation about our elections and election processes. I have and will object to each and every effort by this Legislature and its members to undermine our democracy, to erode confidence in our elections, and to demean and harass dedicated clerks, election administrators, and poll workers.

I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to the manner in which it targets the most vulnerable voters. Indefinitely confined voter status was developed to help sick and disabled voters continue to exercise their constitutional right to vote. While disability rights advocacy groups have supported the need to clarify statutory language regarding indefinitely confined voter status, this bill goes too far by narrowing the definition such that a voter can only be considered indefinitely confined if they cannot travel independently without significant burden due to frailty, physical illness, or a disability that lasts longer than one year. There is no legal or medical justification for the inclusion of "longer than one year" in the definition, and it is also confusingly drafted. Those seeking to further disenfranchise vulnerable voters may seek to argue that the "longer than one year" applies to frailty and physical illness, as well as to disabilities. Rather than provide clarity to the law, this bill would create more confusion. If a circumstance or condition prevents a voter from traveling to the polls on Election Day, it is irrelevant how long the qualifying condition is expected to last.

The bill also requires individuals to fill out a new form that is separate from the regular absentee ballot form to claim indefinitely confined status. This creates another administrative hurdle and may cause confusion for the vulnerable people who need this option the most.

This bill makes it more difficult for elderly, disabled, or otherwise homebound citizens to vote absentee while doing little to improve the security of elections.

Respectfully submitted,


Tony Evers
Governor