



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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City of Milwaukee
Judiciary and Legislation Committee
September 14, 2009
Testimony of Representative Jon Richards

Thank you, Chairman Hamilton and members of the Judiciary and Legislation Committee, for providing me with an opportunity to comment on Resolution 090590 relating to modifying Wisconsin's Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) statute.

Resolution 090590 seeks to change Wisconsin statutes to allow those interested in creating a NID to use regular postal service to notify those in the proposed district of the organizational meeting. Current law requires that those in a proposed district be notified by certified mail. As the author of Wisconsin's NID law, I urge the committee to oppose Resolution 090590.

The NID statute was carefully crafted to strike a balance between business owners and residential property owners. When I was drafting the NID bill I believed that in a typical situation business owners would have more time to devote to the creation of a NID than residential property owners. It is imperative that homeowners who may be subject to a new assessment from a NID be made aware through a highly visible mechanism like certified mail. I fear that notice provided through regular postal service may not receive the attention it deserves.

I respect the author's intention and his commitment to providing enhanced public safety services in Milwaukee. However, I caution against removing the certified mail requirement for creating a NID. Removing that requirement would weaken the law's most important taxpayer protection measure.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to give my perspective on this important matter.