

To: All Legislators

From: Representative Kreibich & Senator Tomczyk

Date: May 20, 2025

Re: Co-sponsorship of LRB -1447/1 relating to: a requirement for fair organizations that seek state aid

Deadline: June 10, 2025 at 5:00 PM

Fairs are part of the fabric of Wisconsin summers. It's an opportunity to salute our rich agriculture heritage and get together to fundraise for the many service organizations that participate in fairs.

Wisconsin has 73 county and district fairs that receive state funding for exhibitor premiums. At the request of the Wisconsin Association of Fairs, we are introducing legislation to modernize 1900s-era state statutes related to reporting requirements needed to receive state funding for fairs.

We are proposing eliminating one sentence from statute that would open the door for Wisconsin fairs to apply for bingo and raffle licenses; the ability to serve hard liquor in addition to the already allowed beer and wine; and no longer be the interpreter of what is considered immoral character.

Bingo and raffles have proven to be popular ways to raise money and create excitement, and fairs would like to add these as additional "revenue streams" to their events. They'd also like to offer "Bloody Mary Sunday Specials" but cannot do so because it would violate the state statute.

A lot has changed since the early 1900s when this statute was created. Fairs continuously look for new ways to innovate and engage attendees with new activities.

If you're interested in supporting your county fair and co-sponsoring this legislation, contact Rep. Kreibich's office or Sen. Tomczyk's office by June 10 at 5:00 PM.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection provides state aid to counties, agricultural societies, associations, and boards that hold local fairs in order to cover the cost of prizes paid out to exhibitors, up to \$20,000 per fair. No later than 30 days after the close of the fair, an entity that seeks to claim this state aid must file with DATCP an itemized statement showing the net premiums actually paid at the preceding fair, and that statement must include a statement that gambling devices, the sale of intoxicating liquors, and exhibitions of immoral character were prohibited and excluded from the fairgrounds. This bill removes the requirement for the statement that gambling devices, the sale of intoxicating liquors, and the exhibitions of immoral character were prohibited and excluded from the fairgrounds.