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**Advocacy Digest | November 19, 2021**

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**Gov. Evers Vetoes GOP Redistricting Plan**

As promised, Governor Tony Evers recently vetoed the republican legislature’s plan to reapportion state assembly and state senate districts. Evers also vetoed a GOP plan to reapportion Wisconsin’s eight congressional districts.

A press release from Governor Evers stated, “The legislative and congressional maps drafted and passed by Republicans in the Legislature are largely based on the current maps Republicans drew a decade ago that have been called some of the most gerrymandered maps in the country. The new maps vetoed today, which have been described as even more gerrymandered than the existing maps, all but ensure Republicans will preserve their undemocratic majorities in the Legislature while increasing Republicans’ chances of disproportionately winning six of Wisconsin’s eight congressional districts."

What comes next? Next up in court, likely either the Wisconsin Supreme Court or a federal court will decide on the lines of legislative districts that will be used for the August primary and November general elections in 2022.

**Bill to Extend Permits Signed into Law**

In October, Governor Evers signed 2021 Senate Bill 254 into law to become [2021 Wisconsin Act 80](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/related/lcactmemo/act080.pdf). The act creates a new provision that allows a person who has received a covered approval to obtain an automatic extension of that approval for 36 months, plus the duration of the administrative, judicial, or appellate proceedings to which the approval is subject. This provision first applies to a covered approval that is subject to a pending administrative, judicial, or appellate proceeding on October 18, 2021.

For the development and construction industry, 2021 Wisconsin Act 80 would apply specifically to permits issued by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Department of Natural Resources.

**Tax Break for Apprenticeship Expenses Passed**

Governor Evers is currently reviewing a bill that was recently passed by both houses of the legislature to provide a tax break for tuition payments made by an individual in an apprenticeship program.

[Senate Bill 125](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/related/proposals/sb125.pdf) (SB 125) allows an individual, when calculating income for state income tax purposes, to subtract the tuition expenses paid by the individual for the individual or the individual's dependent to participate in an apprenticeship program that is approved by the Department of Workforce Development. The deduction would first apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2020.

When SB 125 was first introduced in February, there were several republicans and democrats who signed onto the bill as coauthors. After an initial bipartisan list of sponsors, all four democrats and one republican who initially signed on as coauthors of the bill removed their name from the bill by late October. Groups representing unions are opposed to the bill and groups like WBA and ABC who represent construction and business interests are generally supportive of the bill.

**Bill to Allow for “Stretch Codes” Introduced**

In mid-November, a group of democrats introduced a bill that would allow local municipalities to create and require a commercial building code and a single family (UDC) code that would exceed the statewide code, also know as a “stretch code”. If passed, this plan would negate the current statewide uniformity of the commercial building code and the uniform dwelling code.

[The bill](https://www.wisconsinlobbyists.com/resources/Co-Sponsorship%20Memos/11.19.2021/LRB-5103%20creating%20a%20stretch%20energy%20code%20Memo.pdf) requires the stretch energy code working group (established at the Department of Safety and Professional Services) to establish the stretch energy code, which must have separate components for commercial and residential buildings and must establish minimum energy efficiency requirements that may exceed the requirements of the energy conservation code. The bill provides that any county, city, village, or town may by ordinance, adopt the residential or commercial components of the stretch energy code, or both, and make the adopted requirements of the stretch energy code applicable within the county, city, village, or town.

WBA has always advocated against any measure before the legislature that takes away the uniformity of the UDC and the commercial building code, and will be registering in opposition of this bill once formally introduced.