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To: Senate Committee on Government Operations, Legal Review and Consumer Protection
From: Curt Witynski, J.D., Deputy Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities
Toni Herkert, Government Affairs Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities
Date: June 7, 2021
Re: SB 385, Timeline for Local Redistricting following the 2020 federal census

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities supports SB 385, adjusting the statutory deadlines by which counties and municipalities must accomplish various steps in the local redistricting process following the 2020 federal decennial census. The bill is necessary because of delays in the census process resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that Wisconsin will not receive census data based on the 2020 federal decennial census until as late as the end of September 2021. Ordinarily, the U.S. Census Bureau must deliver census data to the states no later than March 31, 2021.

While larger communities with adequate staff and resources may be able to complete the local redistricting process in a compressed time frame if the census data were received in August, many smaller communities may be hard pressed to do so. Also, a reduced time frame will make it difficult for communities of any size to allow for public input and feedback.

Since it is not certain when the state will receive the 2020 census data, it makes the most sense to adjust the deadlines for this cycle of local redistricting and provide local governments with certainty as to when the process must be completed.

We urge the committee to recommend passage of SB 385 as soon as possible. Thanks for considering our comments.