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[00:00:26] **Speaker 1** Representative Krug, thanks very much for being here. It's great to be here. So why are you proposing allowing an early count of absentee ballots on the Monday before a Tuesday election?

[00:00:36] **Speaker 2** Yeah, we just know from the last few cycles that Milwaukee has been the the later reporter amongst the election results in the state of Wisconsin. It's led to conspiracies that there is late night ballot dumps and all kinds of conjecture that is built from that and exploded over the years every time we have a statewide election. So the answer is to do what 43 other states do and to figure out a way that we can get the ballots counted and people can go to bed knowing who won the election on election day.

[00:01:05] **Speaker 1** What kind of support do you have for that?

[00:01:07] **Speaker 2** You know, the State Assembly voice voted last session. This session, we've got to figure out a way to get it through the state Senate. So we've gotta do it a little bit differently than we did last session, all the components of the absentee processing on Monday are the same as they were last session and now it's combined with a few different ideas. So we got to build some support in the state senate to get.

[00:01:25] **Speaker 1** One of those ideas has to do with new security rules for ballot drop boxes. Yeah, what do those look like?

[00:01:31] **Speaker 2** So what we did is we worked with some groups to do some polling, to see what the most important issues in elections were and the two things that people talked about the most were knowing who won the election before they go to bed and making sure drop boxes are safe and secure. So this built combines those two ideas and says all the guidance from the federal government on drop boxes, all the guidance from the Wisconsin election commission on drop boxes, going to put them in for size, standards, locations, dates and times of uses, and we're going to do what other states do and where do you record the use of drop boxes in the state of Wisconsin?

[00:02:02] **Speaker 1** So when President Trump says he wants to ban mail-in voting and go back to hand counting ballots, you said in an article I read, quote, we put out the fire, he stokes it. What do you mean by that?

[00:02:15] **Speaker 2** Yeah, there's a competition, right? Is every time we get to an answer on what a Wisconsin election should look like and under the constitution, we have the right as a state to decide what our elections look like. So our bill package does talk about a lot of the things that President Trump has brought up about security, knowing who the person is, who's voting, things like that. But we also want to know, like I've said a few times that we want to know who won the election on election day, going back to hand counting or not using machines delays that into perpetuity. So just trying to set aside. The conjecture that the machines are the problem or that we're having late night ballot dumps, we can still do absentee voting by mail in Wisconsin and get the job done in the election.

[00:02:54] **Speaker 1** Now you're looking for a bipartisan agreement on these bills and held a news conference this week with a Democratic lawmaker. Here's what she had to say.

[00:03:05] **Speaker 3** I do not endorse any of his bills in his package, and I don't support the current draft of Monday processing or absentee ballot guidelines. But setting that aside today, we are meeting the moment our country and our state has never been more divided and more contentious. The partisan divide has become not just contentious, but even hostile. Rep Krug and I will continue to model that civil conversations and debate can happen in the same room from the same podium. And with the same goal in mind, in spite of diverging ideas. And as I have told him, I look forward to the spirited debate in a future committee hearing.

[00:03:41] **Speaker 1** So this is this is super interesting that Representative Snodgrass would say she doesn't endorse your proposals, but she stands beside you. What is this about?

[00:03:51] **Speaker 2** We have struck up this relationship on elections the last three years, ever since I took the committee chairmanship, to make sure that each other at least know what the others are doing, that we don't want to surprise each other first and foremost. That second, we talk about concepts before they come to committees so we can have an idea of what we're trying to have an exchange of ideas on. And third, that, we sit in that room in front of the public and hash out our differences when it comes to what we think is the most important issue in Wisconsin, it was just elections. We know that the building is seen as, you know, elections are a proxy for almost everything that we do. If we don't have safe, secure elections and trust in our system, people aren't going to trust anything else we do in the Capitol. So this relationship has built just on the idea that we want to make sure we each know what we're doing.

[00:04:34] **Speaker 1** I will say there are Democrats, as you know, who decry your effort, saying the bills add in partisan poison pills that come from the, quote, extreme flank of the Republican caucus, referencing things like rules around election observers. What's your response to that?

[00:04:53] **Speaker 2** You know, if they see me as the extreme flank of my party, I don't know how to tell them, you know, who might actually be. But these are things that we've talked about in committee the last three years, whether it's ballot curing, whether it's drop boxes, whether its Monday processing. There's nothing new in any of this project that we're working on. It's just the way that they're combined, I think, that makes them not understand exactly what we're trying to accomplish.

[00:05:16] **Speaker 1** Have you worked with Governor Evers on any of this? Do you expect him to sign these into law should they pass?

[00:05:21] **Speaker 2** You know, and that's what I told the legislative Democrats, is that, you know, to be bipartisan, I don't necessarily need them all to agree. I need the governor to agree, right? And we're in this place now where I think the governor recognizes he wants to get some more things done. And like I said, I think the most important area that he could find some bipartisan support and build a legacy is securing our elections and building trust for everybody in the state of Wisconsin. So, yeah, we are, you know, engaged in conversations with the governor's office to make sure they understand exactly what we're trying to accomplish and how four of these bills all working together. Can expand access, ensure results and make sure we build confidence.

[00:05:56] **Speaker 1** Representative Scott Krue, thanks very much.

[00:05:57] **Speaker 2** Absolutely. Thank you.