



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF DANE COUNTY, INC.

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January 10, 2018

Charles E. James, Sr.
Director, FTA Office of Civil Rights
East Building, 5th Floor - TCR
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Director James:

I write today in support of the City of Madison's civil rights complaint against the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT), dated January 3, 2018. Volunteers from the League of Women Voters of Dane County, as part of the Dane County Voter ID Coalition, do extensive outreach to ensure that all citizens are educated about elections, are registered to vote, and have the voter photo ID required to cast a ballot and to have that ballot counted.

Wisconsin's voter photo ID law, in effect intermittently and in various forms since 2012, currently requires that all voters present one of a very limited number of photo IDs in order to cast a ballot that will be counted. For most Wisconsin residents, a WI driver license or ID card is the only form of ID available to them. Those who wish to vote but who are unable to provide the necessary documentation can (for now¹) enter an ID petition process and obtain a temporary ID for voting. *All three forms of photo voter ID require at least one visit to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).*

The current DMV service centers on Odana Road and Sheboygan Avenue in Madison are located in or near neighborhoods with high densities of rental housing, and are served by multiple bus routes. The Odana Road service center also has extended weekday hours (until 6 pm on four weekdays) and is open for six hours (10 am to 4 pm) on Saturdays. The service centers are accessible to transit-dependent citizens and those whose work or family obligations make a visit during the typical workday a serious hardship. *However, these service centers are slated to close in a few days.*

The new service center on Excelsior Drive, outside the Beltline, though surely convenient for those with access to a car, is poorly served by public transportation. Ride times from most west-side neighborhoods are significantly longer, and, except at peak times, access

¹ This provision, ordered by Judge James Peterson in *One Wisconsin Institute v. Thomsen*, is in effect, pending appeal in the 7th Circuit Court.

http://elections.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news/petersonruling_pdf_14890.pdf

will require a lengthy walk through a congested area that is neither pedestrian- nor bicycle-friendly. Furthermore, the new service center will close at 4:45 pm weekdays and will be open on Saturdays only from 8:30 am to noon.

The League is confident that this move of the DMV to a location with limited transit access, in a commercial area, operating for more-limited hours, will add yet another burden to disabled, elderly, and African-American voters in Madison. A study from the UW–Madison Center for Elections Research² showed that about 17,000 registered voters in Dane and Milwaukee Counties were deterred from voting in the November 2016 election because they either did not have a valid ID, or believed that they did not have one, even if they did. Among the conclusions of the study, conducted by Kenneth R. Mayer, Professor of Political Science and Affiliate Faculty of the Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs and UW–Madison, and graduate student Michael G. DeCrescenzo:

- “The burdens of voter ID fell disproportionately on low-income and minority populations.”
- “The survey found considerable confusion about the law. Most of the people who said they did not vote because they lacked ID actually possessed a qualifying form of ID. This confusion may be the result of a lack of effective efforts educating eligible voters of the requirements of the law, and it is consistent with other studies that show many otherwise eligible voters are confused about ID laws.”

The League believes this is in part because, after implementing its voter photo ID law, the state of Wisconsin grossly underfunded educational campaigns to inform voters about the new law. North Carolina, with a population about twice that of Wisconsin, spent \$2 million to educate voters about the new voter ID requirements.³ In Wisconsin, where the law was passed, then stayed, then reinstated, then modified, and now remains under appeal, there was a lot more opportunity for public confusion, and the state has spent less than \$500,000 on voter ID education.

From the League’s perspective, protected populations in Dane County face a perfect storm of challenges to voting:

- A restrictive voter ID law that, for most voters, requires at least one trip to the DMV to get an ID acceptable for voting
- Insufficient education about the voter ID requirements, which leaves significant confusion among voters, who are thereby deterred from voting

² Attached, Voter ID study press release

<https://elections.wisc.edu/news/voter-id-study/Voter-ID-Study-Release.pdf>

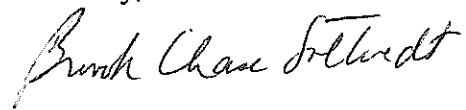
³ http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/federal-judge-to-order-state-to-publicize-process-for-people/article_8b785da9-b9a2-5b57-861d-e25db712c934.html

- A change to both the location and hours of operation of DMV service centers that will decrease access for transit-dependent voters significantly

Together, these developments bode ill for voters facing four elections in 2018.

To partially mitigate this situation, the Wisconsin DOT should open a DMV service center at a west Madison location with regular, convenient public-transit access, where citizens can obtain a Wisconsin ID for voting or enter the ID petition process. Hours of operation should include weekend and evening times for those who would otherwise be required to take time off work to get an ID.

Sincerely,



Brook Chase Soltvedt
President

cc: Yvette Rivera, Associate Director, US DoT Departmental Office of Civil Rights at
yvette.rivera@dot.gov

EMBARGOED UNTIL 7:00PM CST 9/25/17

CONTACT: Kenneth R. Mayer, Professor of Political Science, UW-Madison,
krmayer@wisc.edu, 608-263-2286
Scott McDonell, Dane County Clerk, mcdonell@countyofdane.com.

Voter ID Study Shows Turnout Effects in 2016 Wisconsin Presidential Election

MADISON — A survey of registered voters in Dane and Milwaukee Counties who did not vote in the 2016 presidential election found that 11.2% of eligible nonvoting registrants were deterred by the Wisconsin's voter ID law. This corresponds to 16,801 people in the two counties deterred from voting, and could be as high as 23,252 based on the confidence interval around the 11.2% estimate, which is between 7.8% and 15.5%. The survey further found that 6% of nonvoters were *prevented* from voting because they lacked ID or cited ID as the main reason they did not vote, which corresponds to 9,001 people, and could be as high as 14,101 based on the confidence interval of between 3.5% and 9.4%.

Roughly 80% of registrants who were deterred from voting by the ID law, and 77% of those prevented from voting, cast ballots in the 2012 election.

Based on these estimates, if all of the affected registrants voted the voter ID requirement reduced turnout in the two counties by 2.24 percentage points under the main measure of effect, and by 1.2 percentage points under a conservative measure. If they voted at 2012 rates, voter ID lowered turnout by 0.9 to 1.8 percentage points.

The burdens of voter ID fell disproportionately on low-income and minority populations. Among low-income registrants (household income under \$25,000), 21.1% were deterred, compared to 7.2% for those over \$25,000. Among high-income registrants (over \$100,000 household income), 2.7% were deterred.

8.3% of white registrants were deterred, compared to 27.5% of African Americans.

The study, conducted by Principal Investigator Kenneth R. Mayer, Professor of Political Science and Affiliate Faculty of the Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs and UW Madison, with Ph.D. candidate Michael G. DeCrescenzo, was based on the statewide database of registered voters (WisVote), which records whether a registrant cast a ballot in the November presidential election. The survey was administered by the UW Survey Center, and funded by the Dane County Clerk's Office. The data are based on a sample of 288 nonvoting registrants who were on the rolls on or before election day, November 8, 2016.

The survey asked registrants about their reasons for not voting, the types of ID they possess, interest in the election, confidence in the accuracy of the vote count, and de-

mographics. The survey did not ask voters about who they would have voted for or their party identification.

The survey found considerable confusion about the law. Most of the people who said they did not vote because they lacked ID actually possessed a qualifying form of ID. This confusion may be the result of a lack of effective efforts educating eligible voters of the requirements of the law, and it is consistent with other studies that show many otherwise eligible voters are confused about ID laws. There were no significant differences between people who had seen information about the voter ID law and those who had not.

“This study provides better data than previous efforts to measure the effects of ID laws, which have largely been based on aggregate turnout, matching registered voters to state driver’s license and ID databases, or looking at the number of rejected provisional ballots cast by voters without an ID” said PI Mayer. “By asking nonvoters their reasons for not voting, and about what forms of ID they actually possess, we get a better understanding of how voter ID laws affect individuals, and what types of people are most deterred by the laws. The data show that poor and minority populations are affected the most.”

“The main conclusion of the study is that thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, of otherwise eligible people were deterred from voting by the ID law,” said Mayer. “The 11.2% figure is actually a lower bound since it does not include people who don’t even register because they lack an ID. And while the total number affected in Milwaukee and Dane Counties is smaller than the margin of victory in the 2016 presidential election, that is the wrong measure. An eligible voter who cannot vote because of the ID law is disenfranchised, and that in itself is a serious harm to the integrity to the electoral process.”

Supporting information available at <https://elections.wisc.edu/news/voter-id-study>

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