October 26, 2017

**Statement to the Dane County Board in support of Resolution 248, calling for the temporary suspension of Wisconsin's photo ID law**

From the beginning, Wisconsin's voter ID law (2011 Act 23) was intended to suppress the vote, and the study by Professor Ken Mayer and Michael DeCrescenzo demonstrates its success.

It also demonstrates what League members have seen in practice: In our outreach work at farmers’ markets, senior centers, community festivals, food pantries, and campuses, we see tremendous confusion about voter registration and voter ID requirements. The rules are now so complicated that the League, working with the Dane County Voter ID coalition, assembled *Making It Clear*, a document for voter advocates to reference when assisting citizens. These 11 pages of charts and tables are required to keep track of the different requirements for documents used as proof of residence for voter registration, proof of identity for voter ID, and obtaining voter ID at the DMV.

Resolution 248 calls for a comprehensive and aggressive public education campaign and that is exactly what is required to ensure that citizens are not deterred from voting either because they misunderstand voter ID requirements or are unwilling to risk the inconvenience and embarrassment of being turned away from the polls for not having the correct ID.

The state's Bring It to the Ballot campaign to inform Wisconsinites about the voter ID requirement was clearly inadequate and poorly targeted. The Government Accountability Board spent about $200,000 on the campaign in 2011-2012 before the voter ID law was enjoined. The Wisconsin Elections Commission spent “more than $250,000" updating the campaign for 2016-2017.¹ (By comparison, North Carolina, with roughly twice the population, spent $2,000,000 publicizing their voter ID law.)

Immediately after elections, League members work with the City of Madison Clerk's office to offer provisional voters assistance in providing the photo ID required to have their ballots counted. Despite our best efforts, in November 2016, 107 out of 122 provisional ballots cast in Madison could not be counted. Countywide, 140 provisional ballots were rejected, and statewide, 600 were rejected.²

Resolution 248 calls for a process for voters to present an affidavit in lieu of photo identification. Indeed, such an affidavit process has already been ordered by a federal

---

¹ Reid Magney, public information officer, Wisconsin Elections Commission
² Reid Magney, public information officer, Wisconsin Elections Commission
court, although that order has been stayed pending appeal. In granting a preliminary injunction against enforcement of the voter ID law following *Frank v. Walker II*, Judge Adelman wrote, “I conclude that the plaintiffs are very likely to succeed on their claim that Act 23 is unconstitutional as applied to those who cannot obtain ID with reasonable effort, and that the appropriate remedy is to allow those voters to present an affidavit in lieu of photo identification.”

An affidavit process would have allowed most of those provisional votes to count. And combined with a rigorous education campaign, would certainly have encouraged more citizens confused about voter ID requirements to vote.

Thank you for your strong support of the voting rights of the citizens of Dane County.

Sincerely,

Brook Chase Soltvedt
President