Sent by email to members of the Personnel and Finance Committee on November 14, 2017.
Chenoweth, Clausius, Corrigan, Dye, Erickson, Miles, Pertl, Schauer, and Stubbs

The Dane County Board Executive Committee unanimously approved amendment EXEC-O-08, adding $25,000 to the County Clerk’s budget for voter ID education. LWVDC registered in support of this increase. In the past, county voter education funds have been used to provide cab rides to the DMV for persons who needed an ID, for printing of voter outreach materials, and for research to determine the impact of the voter ID law on potential voters.

I am writing to ask that the Personnel and Finance Committee fund the full $25,000 approved by the Executive Committee.

The Dane County League believes that voter education is still of critical importance. As Professor Ken Mayer reported at the October 26th meeting of the County Board, his research on the impact of voter ID on Dane and Milwaukee Counties’ voter turnout (funded by the County Board) estimates that as many as 23,000 people in the two counties were deterred from voting because they either did not have a valid ID, or believed that they did not have one, even if they did. So there is still great confusion among voters about voting requirements.

Furthermore, in January, 2018, the Odana Road and Sheboygan Avenue Service Centers of the DMV will move to a single new location on Excelsior Drive, outside the Beltline. This move to a location with extremely limited bus service is likely to be an additional barrier to those who need to visit the DMV to get an ID for voting or to enter the ID petition process in time to vote in the February 20th primary for Supreme Court Justice (and possibly other offices). Dane County needs to continue to provide public information and assistance to ensure that persons with disabilities and economically disadvantaged people are not deprived of the opportunity to vote because they need help understanding the voter ID requirements.

Finally, the 7th Circuit Court has not yet issued a ruling on the appeal of the two voter ID lawsuits (Frank v. Walker II and One Wisconsin Institute v. Thomsen). Should they decide to rule, voter ID rules could change again.

It is critical that the Dane County Clerk have adequate funds to help educate Dane County voters about the confusing voter ID requirements in a year with four important statewide elections.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Brook Chase Soltvedt
President