November 28, 2017

The Honorable James D. Peterson  
U.S. District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 North Henry Street, Room 540  
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Judge Peterson:

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 have that ballot counted. Our League has become alarmed by several developments related to citizens’ access to the ballot, particularly in Dane County. Because you are still monitoring the state’s compliance with your orders in One Wisconsin Institute vs. Thomsen, we wanted to bring our concerns to your attention.

We have three key concerns:

1. A study from the UW–Madison Center for Elections Research\(^1\) showing 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. Low-income and minority voters were disproportionately affected. \textit{There is still great confusion among voters about voting requirements.}

2. The impending move of the DMV service centers on Odana Road and Sheboygan Avenue to a facility on Excelsior Drive, outside the Beltline, that is poorly served by public transportation.

3. The staffing shortage at the Wisconsin Elections Commission, which threatens both the security of our entire voting system and the ability of the WEC to serve the public—directly and by adequately training municipal clerks.

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

\textbf{Evidence of Voter Suppression Due to Voter ID Law}

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

\(^1\) Attached, Voter ID study press release  
student Michael G. DeCrescenzo provides evidence that significant numbers of registered voters were impacted by the voter ID law. Among the study’s conclusions:

- “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.”

DMV Move

When the League learned through press reports\(^2\) about the DMV’s planned move, we used Madison Metro’s trip planner to determine that bus service to the new DMV location was extremely limited except during peak hours. Concerned about the added burden on those already deterred from voting by lack of voter ID, we brought the issue to the attention of Madison City Clerk Maribeth Witzel-Behl. We hoped to convince city officials to address the transportation issue. The Clerk learned from Madison Metro General Manager Charles Kamp that offering bus service to the new Excelsior Drive DMV location throughout the day would cost an additional $76,500 annually.

We then wrote to Madison Mayor Paul Soglin, requesting that he include funding for this additional bus service to the new DMV in his 2018 budget.\(^3\) The mayor’s budget did not include this funding, so we wrote to the Madison City Council, seeking a budget amendment for added transit service\(^4\). In response, we heard rumors of a possible lawsuit on civil rights grounds, but no budget amendment was forthcoming. The Madison Area Transportation Planning Board, in a November 15th letter from chair Alfred Matano to DOT Secretary Ross,\(^5\) urged the DOT to maintain an office in the current Hill Farms location to provide essential services required to obtain ID for voting.

Failure of the State to Provide for Adequate Voter Education Efforts

When the Dane County Board entertained Resolution 248, calling on the state to suspend the photo ID law temporarily,\(^6\) Professor Mayer made a brief presentation about his research study, which was funded by the Dane County Clerk’s office. Our vice president,


\(^3\) [https://www.lwvdanecounty.org/s/SoglinBusRoutesDMV.pdf](https://www.lwvdanecounty.org/s/SoglinBusRoutesDMV.pdf)


\(^5\) Attached, letter from MATPB chair to DOT Secretary Ross.

Ingrid Rothe, spoke on behalf of the Dane County Voter ID Coalition, which she co-chairs, and I spoke on behalf of the League. A key part of the adopted resolution calls on the state to fund “a comprehensive and aggressive voter education effort.” I noted in my testimony to the Dane County Board that North Carolina, with a population about twice that of Wisconsin, spent $2 million to educate voters about the new voter ID requirements. In Wisconsin, where the law was passed, then stayed, then reinstated, then modified, there was a lot more opportunity for public confusion, and the state has spent less than $500,000 on voter ID education.

In the materials for the November 20, 2017, public meeting of the Wisconsin Elections Commission, administrator Michael Haas explained how the loss of 6 FTE positions from their staff in the last biennium has negatively impacted the agency’s ability to perform the tasks required by law, including training elections staff in counties and municipalities around the state. At that meeting, the WEC voted to seek authorization for three FTE positions. Legislation authorizing five positions, AB578/SB482, has been introduced and referred to committee, but appears to lack bipartisan support.

In light of the evidence from the Mayer and DeCrescenzo study that significant numbers of voters remain confused about voter photo ID rules and that many were deterred from casting a ballot, the League of Women Voters of Dane County finds the state’s continued understaffing of the Wisconsin Elections Commission of great concern, and agrees with the Dane County Board of Supervisors that the status quo is indefensible. We also agree with the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board that losing a DMV location with convenient public transit access is another blow to those citizens who are most challenged in their ability to exercise their right to vote: the economically disadvantaged, minorities, disabled persons, students, and the elderly.

---

7 Video of the meeting: http://media.cityofmadison.com/Mediasite/Play/fdcaee4ca6374bcb54fa8697593dda21d?catalog=b2fff650-d80a-475f-b3de-d2733868ea1f. Prof. Ken Mayer’s presentation, 4:12, Ingrid Rothe’s testimony, 25:23; Brook Soltvedt’s testimony, 29:43; testimony of other registrants and other deliberations follow.


10 Reid Magney, public information officer, Wisconsin Elections Commission


12 https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2017/related/proposals/sb482
If it is within your purview, the League hopes you would consider ordering the state to adequately fund an appropriately targeted, robust public education campaign about voter photo ID requirements. We think it is essential that municipal clerks and their poll workers be well-trained. Further, we hope you could order the DOT to 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. Ideally, the hours of operation might include weekend and evening times for those who would otherwise be required to take time off work to get an ID. The League welcomes any other measures you might take to remedy these barriers to voting caused solely by Wisconsin’s restrictive voter photo ID law.

Sincerely,

Brook Chase Soltvedt
President