

## Know Your Rights on Election Day

Written by Jeff Smith, State Senator District 31

Wednesday, 02 November 2022 08:51 - Last Updated Wednesday, 02 November 2022 09:43

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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/voting-s450.jpg>



***The 2022 General Election is next Tuesday, November 8th. Whether you vote early, by mail-in absentee ballot or on Election Day, it is important to know your rights when it comes to casting your vote.***

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BRUNSWICK, WI - We are days away from another big election – more people will be voting in-person than in recent years. Bustling polling locations, filled with voters and hardworking election staff and volunteers, are always a heartwarming sight.

If you can't vote in-person on Election Day, you have options. You can still early vote in-person at your municipal clerk's office until Sunday. You can also request a mailed absentee ballot until 5pm on Thursday. Be sure your mail-in absentee ballot arrives to your polling location by 8pm on Election Day.

As the Ranking Member of the Senate Elections, Election Process Reform and Ethics Committee, I've long been focused on preserving voting rights. Everyone, regardless of political party preference, deserves a voice in our democracy. I've made this a signature issue of my time in the State Senate.



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Even before 2020, I've pushed to clarify Wisconsin electoral rights. The first bill I introduced as State Senator in 2019 was the Voter Protection Act (VPA). The VPA would've allowed automatic voter registration, increased penalties for voter suppression, deception and intimidation and provided an easy-to-read Voter Bill of Rights. I've introduced this bill twice in four years, but Republicans have not scheduled a public hearing. In the last two years, as more doubt has been shed on our electoral process, we've seen increased attempts to chip away at our voting rights.



It shouldn't be a fight to preserve voting rights. They were hard-won through our Democratic Republic's history. Despite the attacks, voting remains an unalienable right born from our Constitutional Convention. The silver lining of enfranchising new people over the course of history has been seeing the enthusiasm, empowerment and vindication of the principles on which our country was founded.

It's only recently that we've seen a departure from expanding voter access. Over the last 12 years, Wisconsin has seen more politically-motivated attempts to block people from voting than ever. We've been witnessing the slow and continual degradation of our representative democracy. Everyone wants their side to win, but what is gained if we've lost sight of what we've built?

Democracy's fragility was seen firsthand on January 6th, 2021 when the plot to overthrow the election narrowly failed. It led to introspection for many, sparked anger in others and emboldened some.

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Since November 3, 2020, it has been the first time in 50 years that voters have had the opportunity to vote in person on Election Day. This is an important day for all voters.



While it is important to know your rights, it is also important to know your responsibilities. This is a day to exercise your right to vote and to make your voice heard.