

Federal Judges Hand Down Voting Rights Victories For Wisconsinites

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Brandon Weathersby

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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/voter-us-elections-s5.jpg>



Many of the voter suppression laws signed and defended by Gov. Scott Walker were unconstitutional, as they purposefully make it harder for people to vote. Decisions help in-person absentee voters, return residency requirements from 28 to 10 days, and lift restrictions on student IDs. Individuals waiting for a photo ID will be given credentials to vote.

MADISON - Two federal court decisions handed down Friday afternoon will begin to alleviate cumbersome restrictive voter laws and make it easier for people to carry out their fundamental and constitutional right to vote.

In the lawsuit *One Wisconsin Institute Inc., et al v. Gerald Nichol, et al.*, US District Judge James Peterson ruled that many of the voter suppression laws signed and defended by Gov. Scott Walker were unconstitutional, as they purposefully make it harder to vote for young people, minorities, and the poor. The judge ordered a number of expedient changes to the burdensome laws, including allowing in-person absentee voters to use multiple locations to cast their ballot, reducing the residency requirements from 28 to 10 days, as well as allowing expired but credible student IDs to be used to vote. In addition, Judge Peterson ordered that individuals waiting for a photo ID be given credentials that allows them to vote.

Just this past April hundreds of college students had to wait up to four hours to vote in the presidential primary because of restrictive photo ID laws. Coupled with record primary turnout, some polling locations were not fully prepared to instruct students on what they needed to register and vote. In addition, at polling locations across the state many individuals had to run back and forth between their home and the polls to acquire proper documentation, resulting in far too many people giving up entirely on the process due to the burdensome process.

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"I'm thrilled to see the courts realize that the laws passed and defended by Gov. Scott Walker were so damaging to the sacred constitutional right to vote held by every single person in Wisconsin and across this country," Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair **Martha Laning** said on Saturday. "Certain forces seek to win elections, control, and power by any means necessary. Fortunately, their will to suppress the vote does not supersede the fundamental right found in our constitution that every person, regardless of their age, skin color, income, or party affiliation has the right to have their voice heard at the ballot box."

This wasn't the only victory for Wisconsinites. At the order of Gov. Walker, Attorney General Brad Schimel challenged U.S. District Judge Lynn Adelman's decision to allow people who could not acquire a proper photo ID to sign an affidavit to verify who they are when they vote. Schimel asked for a stay of the decision, which would effectively nullify the judge's decision and continue to suppress the ability of people across Wisconsin from casting their vote, but was denied a stay on Friday.

"Our elected leaders should be chosen on a fair playing field, not in a manner that stacks the deck against certain groups of voters. The stringent voting laws passed by Republicans in our state and subsequently struck down by the courts don't belong on the books. It is time Gov. Walker stop defending these laws and respect the constitutional rights of all Wisconsinites." Laning concluded.