

New Republican Absentee Voting Law Another Round in “Voter Games”

Posted on Mar 28, Posted by [Bob Kiefert, Green Bay Progressive](#) Category [Our View](#)



GREEN BAY - If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. That seems to be the Republican motto when it comes to keeping those pesky Democratic voters from voting.

A few years back, they invented the great “voter fraud” epidemic, with no real evidence that it ever existed, to justify a voter ID law in Wisconsin. Since many more poor people, especially those in the inner city who tended to vote heavily Democratic, don't have drivers licenses and such, why not run them through a few extra hoops the Republican heads reasoned. Maybe some would just give up rather than vote.

After a few scares, the courts finally put a hold on that idea. Seems there was something in the Constitution that doesn't allow you to inhibit the people's right to vote.

So on Thursday, Gov. Scott Walker quietly signed into law a Republican bill that limits in-person absentee voting to no later than 7 p.m. during the week and no weekend hours. The new law is a dagger to the heart of the Democratic Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) effort of recent years.

It seems those same poor people, and other hourly working people who tend to vote for Democrats, have jobs and find it hard to get to the polls on election day before the six o'clock rush. There is, of course, a law that says your employer has to give you time off to vote, but it doesn't say they have to pay you for it and you know how that goes.

Republican supporters, for the most part, who do work tend to be more likely managers or other salaried employees who can just take off for an hour or two during the day. Or, as you know if

you ever voted in Cedarburg, polling places in the suburbs tend to have about three voting machines for every voter.

So the Democrats reasoned they could raise their voters turnout if they pushed early in-person absentee voting among their people to avoid the rush. It actually came down as a strategy from the national Obama for America people and it worked well for them. It became one of the biggest pieces of the Democratic GOTV effort and had begun to show signs of success.

Of course, the Democrats know what the Republicans are up to with their new law and will challenge it in court. And the courts, in their wisdom, will probably find sooner or later that the Constitution doesn't allow you to pass laws that inhibit the people's right to vote. But by then, the Republicans reason, Scott Walker and the Republican majority in the Wisconsin Legislature will be re-elected and it won't matter.

And while all these Madison political strategists continue to concentrate on the voter games, Wisconsin will continue to drift into mediocrity and drop down the latter among in states in job creation. Will anyone ask what ever happened to those 250,000 new jobs Scott Walker promised to deliver in the last election?

We think not.

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