

Know Your Rights on Election Day

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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.

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.



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.



November 8th will be our first big Election Day since November 2020. Voters not only need to be informed about who they are voting for and how to vote, but now it's more important than ever to know your voting rights.



Clerk staff and polling location volunteers do an amazing job during every election. They are unsung heroes of our democracy. They've always been under the microscope of election observers, and this election will be no exception.

Observing the election process is a great opportunity to understand how seriously our election officials take their jobs and how it all works. The privilege to witness democracy in action is good for transparency and alleviating any doubts about the process. Voters shouldn't be surprised to see observers at the polls. This year, there may be more than usual. In recent news, the Republican Party of Wisconsin announced more than 5,000 observers to watch over elections – three times more than usual.

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