

There Are Difficulties for Some to Obtain an ID to Vote

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While it is not an undue burden for most people to obtain a valid photo ID to vote, it is too difficult for some people. Voting is a right for every eligible person, and no political party should place barriers in front of those who want to vote.

MADISON - The decision by the US Appeals Court to send a recent voter ID case back to the Federal District Court (lower court) acknowledges that for some, obtaining an ID to vote is so burdensome that they may not be able to vote in violation of the state and federal law.

The Appeals Court directed the lower court to find a way to allow some voters to vote without a photo ID because they cannot receive one the way the law currently stands.

This is not a surprise to those of us that did not support passage of this proposal.

Voting is a right for every eligible person in Wisconsin and it is simply not the job of any political party to place barriers in front of those that want to vote. The illusion that voter fraud is a reality has been shattered many times. Attorney Generals, Judges and District Attorneys have found no voter fraud.

It is this simple, voting is just not a high benefit crime for criminals and the outlier in our 5 million person state who votes more than once is found out and prosecuted like the case against republican Robert Monroe.

To sum up the decision, while the court said it is not an undue burden for most people to obtain a valid photo ID to vote, it is too difficult for some people. Some people can even be put into classes, or groups of individuals who cannot obtain a valid ID that qualifies under the Wisconsin law. While three groups are a part of this action by the court, some may say there are other groups that have exceptional difficulty obtaining a valid ID to vote. This ruling opens the door.

Homeless and those that move frequently for a variety of reasons often have no valid ID because they live on the streets, in shelters or on a friends couch. Being transient does not make an individual ineligible to vote. In Wisconsin, the number of people experiencing homelessness has increased every year since 2008 with the numbers reaching at least 25,000 in Wisconsin.

In this decision the court acknowledged that for some groups of individuals who want to vote obtaining a valid photo ID is an exceptional challenge. My hope is that through this decision and what happens next in the lower court there will be a clear path for the right to vote for all.

The absence of Legislative remedy is not a reason for the court to be blind to the realized and actual shortcomings of the law. The courts job under the Constitution in the balance of the powers doctrine is to interpret the law. The Republican Legislature passed this law and said over and over “not one voter would be displaced by this law.” It is the job of the courts to make sure that is a reality.

For more information on this recent court decision or voter ID laws in general please contact my office at sen.erpenbach@legis.wi.gov or call 888-549-0027.

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