

League of Women Voters: Respond to executive order 14 concerning photo IDs for voting

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Earlier this week Governor Evers signed Executive Order #14, which acknowledges flaws in our strict photo ID rules for voting. The Order tries to remedy some of those problems by asking the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to develop a plan to make it easier for voters to get ID. This could include such steps as increasing accessibility to DMV locations through extended hours and alternate locations, more and better public education about voter identification requirements, and providing annual reports on these changes. Wisconsin Election Protection and the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin believe this is a good first step in making voting easier for Wisconsin residents who have been disenfranchised by our strict photo ID laws.

“While we disagree with the idea that Wisconsin needs photo ID and know that the law burdens many voters and confuses many more, to the extent that voters must have ID, we are glad that this administration is requiring the DMV to do more to help voters get ID,” said Eileen Newcomer of The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin. “The more the DMV can do to make voting accessible to all eligible voters, the better.”

“There are many community members and advocates who have worked to help voters with problems getting ID and voters who are confused about ID requirements,” added Karyn Rotker, a member of the Wisconsin Election Protection Legal Coordinating Committee. “We urge the administration and Wisconsin DOT to

work with and obtain input from those groups to create a strong, effective plan to help ensure that all eligible voters understand the law and are able to vote.”

Wisconsin Election Protection and The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin are concerned that DMV continues to have unreasonably restrictive processes for ID issuance and make these recommendations for improvements:

- Require posting in DMV and at polling sites about the ID requirement and about the ID Petition Process (IDPP), (including what documents can be used to get an ID);
- Require DMV to amend rules so that voters only have to go to DMV once (and can bring whatever alternative documents they have at that time), instead of requiring multiple visits to DMV;
- Require DMV to issue receipts valid for voting to all applicants at the time of application, to ensure that voters who enter the IDPP process are able to obtain a form of ID valid for voting without delay;
- Require DMV to publicize and provide handouts on all documents that can be used to prove citizenship, name/DOB, and identity/residency, as well as on the digital photo look-up option for those who have had ID in the past.

In addition, there are transportation and scheduling barriers that preclude some Wisconsin residents from obtaining a Wisconsin state ID. The DMV therefore should also:

- Ensure that evening and weekend hours are available at all DMV service centers during the 60 days prior to any election, and publicize that availability; and
- Provide mobile vehicles to take DMV services to communities, especially communities of rural, homeless, indigent and disabled voters.

Finally, there is no question that many voters remain unaware of or confused by the photo ID requirements and exceptions for voting. We recommend expanded voter education and outreach to educate voters unfamiliar with the photo ID laws, especially underrepresented, low-income, rural, and voters with disabilities. The DMV needs to work with the Wisconsin Elections Commission to provide much needed proactive voter education and outreach from official sources that will help

voters find accurate information rather than problematic third-party sources of election information.