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One Wisconsin Institute: No joke: Record early voting in spring 2019 election

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‘Voters Vote When Given the Opportunity to Vote’

MADISON, Wis. — Early and absentee voting in the April 2019 election has reached record levels for a non-presidential primary Spring election, according to statistics compiled by the Wisconsin Election Commission. As of April 1, over 132,000 Wisconsin voters had cast a ballot early or absentee for the Spring election, exceeding the 2018 Spring election’s roughly 107,000 early votes cast.

“It’s simple, voters vote when given the opportunity to vote,” said One Wisconsin Institute Executive Director Analiese Eicher. “Expanded hours and satellite locations for early voting are making participating in our elections easier and more convenient, and voters all across Wisconsin are taking advantage of the opportunity in record numbers.”

A July 2016 ruling in the federal voting rights lawsuit One Wisconsin Institute, et. al. v. Thomsen, et. al. struck down a number of voter suppression laws adopted by then-Gov. Scott Walker and the Republican-controlled legislature. Judge James Peterson specifically found the GOP imposed limits on early voting were racially discriminatory.

After the ruling, both urban and rural municipalities throughout the state were able to offer the convenience of early voting in the evening, on weekends and at multiple locations at their discretion to meet the needs of voters in their community.

State Republicans subsequently attempted to reimpose early vote restrictions in a lame duck session they convened after losing every statewide office on the ballot in the November 2018 election. In enforcing his earlier decision and enjoining the re-imposition of early voting limits Judge Peterson wrote, “This is not a close question: the three challenged provisions are clearly inconsistent with the injunctions that the court has issued in this case.”

Eicher concluded, “Early voting is popular, effective and legal. Now it’s time for the Wisconsin Republicans to drop their efforts to stand in the way of people participating in our democracy and admit it’s also here to stay.”