

DNC, WisDems: File lawsuit to expand access to voting in wake of global pandemic

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MADISON, WI – Today, the Democratic National Committee and the Democratic Party of Wisconsin are filing a request in the Western District of Wisconsin to expand access to voting in response to the growing coronavirus threat.

The suit seeks the following:

- Extend the electronic and by-mail registration to April 3;
- Suspend the requirement that copies of photo identification accompany absentee ballot requests and copies of proof of residency documents accompany voter registration requests, for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak; and
- Extend the current deadline requiring absentee mail-in ballots to be received by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day to being postmarked by Election Day and received by municipal clerks' offices within 10 days of the election.

By implementing these measures, the state can ensure that Wisconsinites' right to vote is not infringed upon during this extraordinary and unprecedented time.

While the coronavirus pandemic poses an escalating public health crisis and there are a growing number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Wisconsin, today remains

the electronic and by-mail registration deadline for Wisconsinites to participate in the April 7 elections. In order to control the spread of the coronavirus, schools, libraries, and businesses across the state have closed, Governor Evers banned gatherings of more than 10 people in the state, and public health officials have recommended social distancing and self-isolation to individuals in Wisconsin and across the country. The unintended consequence of these measures is a limit on the ability of Wisconsinites to access the tools necessary to comply with current rules around voter registration and absentee ballot submissions and potentially prevent countless Wisconsinites from successfully voting.

Extending registration deadlines, suspending burdensome voter documentation requirements, and extending the deadline for absentee by-mail ballots that are postmarked on or by Election Day to be received by municipal clerks' offices within 10 days of the election are all essential to ensuring that the April 7 elections are free, thorough and safe.

Democratic Party Chair Tom Perez issued the following statement:

"These steps are critical to ensuring that all Wisconsinites who wish to participate in the April 7 elections are able to do so. Given the necessary measures taken by Governor Evers and public health officials in Wisconsin to limit the spread of the virus, it's more important than ever that we expand access to voting, and increasing these necessary measures will help protect both public health and Wisconsinites' right to participate in our democracy."

Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Ben Wikler issued the following statement:

"Nobody should have to choose between exposure to COVID-19 and disenfranchisement. The court should immediately strike down the barriers to full participation in voting by mail. Our democracy depends on our ability to conduct free, safe, and fair elections, no matter what—even during a pandemic."