

Federal judge pushes back deadline to register online for absentee ballot in spring election

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A federal judge [Friday night pushed back](#) the deadline to register electronically to vote in the spring election, citing the impact of the coronavirus.

Judge William Conley also denied two other requests from state and national Dems as they sought to relax Wisconsin regulations on absentee ballots. But he reserved the option for Dems to again ask him to extend the deadline for counting absentee ballots if they can show there's a need to do so.

Wednesday was the deadline to register online or by mail ahead of the April 7 election. Those who failed to meet the deadline would've had to appear in person at a clerk's office to register in order to receive an absentee ballot. They also would've had the option to go to the polls on Election Day.

Conley noted the public health concerns of exposure to the coronavirus in ordering an extension until March 30 to register online, noting the "excruciating dilemma" faced by those who didn't register by Wednesday: "either venture into public spaces, contrary to public directives and health guidelines or stay at home and lose the opportunity to vote."

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He didn't extend the deadline to register by mail, as Dems had asked. Conley ruled doing so would've given some voters a "false sense of confidence" their mail-in registration would've been received in time to vote absentee in the April 7 election.

Conley also rejected a request to suspend the photo ID requirements for voting absentee and another requiring voters to provide proof of residency documents with

their registration requests until the COVID-19 crisis is over.

Dems also sought to extend the deadline for an absentee ballot to be received in order for it to be counted. Currently, absentee ballots have to be received by 8 p.m. on Election Day. The suit asked that they instead be postmarked by Election Day and received by municipal clerks within 10 days of the April 7 election.

Conley wrote while the argument may have merit, he wants more evidence before granting an extension.