

Milwaukee Ald.-elect Dimitrijevic: SafeVote boosts voter safety and reduced disenfranchisement in the fall election

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On April 7 more than 18,000 Milwaukee citizens bravely exercised their sacred right to vote by going to the polls in the face of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The world watched as Milwaukee voters and poll workers wore masks and practiced social distancing to protect the health of our City for an in-person vote that was dangerous, ill-advised and – as one voter noted in a now viral protest sign – ridiculous.

To help avoid a replay of the April 7 election, I am introducing legislation to create a SafeVote program under which all registered voters in the City of Milwaukee would receive an application for an absentee ballot along with a postage-paid return envelope in time for them to participate in the Fall 2020 General Election. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that nothing is truly certain at the moment, but with SafeVote we can make certain that all registered voters in Milwaukee can easily apply for an absentee ballot for the historic and pivotal election this fall.

The SafeVote measure will be a key item on the short agenda at next Tuesday's charter meeting of the 2020-2024 Common Council, and I look forward to working with my new colleagues to help move it forward.

The Council can help ensure access to mail-in voting that is (according to calls, emails and media reports) widely supported by residents. Whitefish Bay implemented a similar program for this past election which resulted in a 60% turnout, and we deserve this level of participation as well.

I believe the time is now to offer Milwaukee's determined and undaunted citizens a safe and sensible option for them to exercise their right to vote this fall.

When we invest in ensuring everyone has safe ballot access and a voice in local government, we invest in ourselves.