

Milwaukee DSA: Organizes caravan protest for COVID-19 relief

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Monday, April 13, the Milwaukee chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America will lead a caravan of cars through downtown Milwaukee to demand further emergency measures to protect the health, safety, and well-being of all residents of Milwaukee and Wisconsin. The caravan will be assembling across from 649 E Erie St. at 4pm and stepping off at 4:30pm to visit the Federal Building (517 E. Wisconsin), City Hall (200 E. Wells), the Journal-Sentinel (333 W. State), and the State Office Building (819 N. 6th).

We are outraged that in person voting was allowed to happen last week and disappointed with the way our leaders have mishandled our recent election and our society is on the brink of a depression. Unemployment has rapidly skyrocketed from an all-time low of 2.8% in March to nearly 27% today, exacerbating the already existing inequality of our society. Communities of color and those suffering from financial and food insecurity are particularly vulnerable.

As Rachael Steidl, chapter Secretary, explains, “Our government is acting too slowly to take care of their people in this time of crisis (of both virus and voter suppression). We can’t let them continue to play games with our lives.” A teacher at North Division High School, who wishes to remain anonymous out of fear of reprisal, is joining the protest because “As an educator of students of color in Milwaukee Public Schools in the 53206 zip code, I see how devastating COVID-19, mass incarceration, poverty, inequitable health care and many more racial inequities affect their daily lives.”

Brandy Johnson, Co-Chair of Milwaukee DSA, says that “COVID-19 is exposing how both local and federal government is failing the people by forcing them to choose between their health and their right to vote. The in-person election forced people

with compromised immune systems to go to one of the five polling locations in Milwaukee where there were hundreds of people lined up to vote, further exposing them to the potential of contracting this deadly virus. Even today as people receive their ballots late and as postal offices find undelivered requested absentee ballots, the election that took place on April 7th was illegitimate and a gamble on people's lives that the elected officials in this state were willing to take."

Further steps must be taken immediately to safeguard all members of our society, and especially the most vulnerable. We are demanding a moratorium on all housing foreclosures, rent, mortgage payments, and debts accrued, immediate cash transfers to poor and working people to supplement federal payments, opening of vacant and underused properties to shelter homeless individuals, additional funding for public assistance, expansion of Medicaid eligibility to the uninsured, furloughing of prisoners awaiting trial a moratorium on cash bail, declaration that Wisconsin's April 7 elections were illegitimate, and extension of mail-in voting or annulment of the election results and new elections. A full list of the demands can be found [here](#).