

Wisconsin AFL-CIO President Bloomingdale: Statement on Wisconsin's April 7, 2020 spring election in-person vote during COVID-19 pandemic

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“Today, has been equal parts infuriating and inspiring. No voter should be asked to do what Wisconsin voters are doing today — in-person voting during the coronavirus pandemic. It is the latest shameful example of the Wisconsin Republican Party and their allies in the courts putting naked partisan politics above the public interest.

No voter should have to choose between personal health and safety, and expressing our democratic freedom and constitutional right to vote in our American electoral process. Placed in this untenable position, Wisconsin voters bravely rose to the occasion.

Too many voters were left with impossible choices. Absentee ballots that were requested and never came. Deadlines and requirements that changed by the second. Self-isolating voters who couldn't find a witness to sign their ballot. Young voters like my son, who turned 18 over the weekend, with no options to register and receive a mail-in ballot in advance.

The inspiring turnout in the face of unnecessary obstacles in no way diminishes this reckless disregard of public safety and our cherished democratic process. Republicans in Wisconsin pulled out all the stops to proceed with in-person voting during the COVID-19 public health emergency because they thought it was to their

own, partisan advantage. They were willing to risk our lives for it.

Today was inspiring, because risking life, but not liberty, Wisconsin voters showed up. We waited for hours in lines that wrapped around city blocks, standing 6-feet apart. Sometimes in the pouring rain. We wore our masks, and gloves. We had our hands sprayed with sanitizer. Poll workers wore appropriate PPE and bravely served alongside the National Guard to give us direction and make attempts to keep us safe. While the resilience, courage, and determination of Wisconsin voters is unparalleled, we should have never been put in this position in the first place.

We sincerely hope no voter and no poll worker is infected at the polls today. But if anyone does get the coronavirus at the polls, Wisconsin voters will remember this day and know whose hands the blood is on.”