

Gov. Evers, Colleagues: Urge Senate action to protect voting rights

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today, together with 16 other governors, sent a letter to U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and U.S. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell expressing concern over threats to the nation's democracy and calling for action on federal legislation to protect voting rights and the right of every eligible voter to cast their ballot.

The letter specifically calls for the U.S. Senate to pass the Freedom to Vote Act and the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, two federal bills that would ensure fairness in our elections, end partisan gerrymandering, modernize voter registration, and fight back against voter suppression efforts in Wisconsin and across the country.

“Working to ensure every eligible voter has the right to cast their ballot shouldn't be a partisan or political issue—it's a fundamental part of our democracy and ensuring we continue to have free, safe, and secure elections,” said Gov. Evers. “Hundreds of bills have been introduced in states across our country by politicians trying to abuse their power to overturn or predetermine election results. Federal action is needed now more than ever to strengthen our democracy and ensure folks who are eligible to vote have free and fair access to the ballot box.”

The governors' letter comes as states across the country are seeing elected officials abuse their power to make it harder for eligible voters to cast their ballots, attack election administrators and workers, and undermine election laws. In Wisconsin, Legislative Republicans have signaled they may pursue efforts to take over election administration after rewriting the laws only a few years ago, have attacked and disparaged election administrators, and have spread disinformation about the November 2020 election.

Earlier this year, Gov. Evers [vetoed](#) a set of legislation passed by Republicans in the Legislature that would have added unnecessary hurdles for eligible voters to cast their ballots, including specific provisions that would have made it more difficult for older voters and voters with disabilities to participate in elections. The legislation vetoed by the governor also included bills that would have limited absentee voting and restricted local officials' ability to administer elections. Additionally, after Republicans in the Legislature last month passed legislative and congressional maps that the governor slammed as "[gerrymandering 2.0](#)" and that received "[F](#)" ratings from the Princeton Gerrymandering Project, Gov. Evers fulfilled his promise to [veto](#) gerrymandered maps sent to his desk.

The Freedom to Vote Act would:

- Stop gerrymandered election maps;
- Support continued election transparency;
- Push back against new voter suppression laws;
- Protect local election officials and poll workers from partisan attacks and harassment; and
- Establish standards for post-election audits. The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would:

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- Restore the protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the federal government's ability to respond to discrimination at the polls;
- Update federal law in the wake of the Supreme Court decision in *Shelby v. Holder*;
- Modernize the formula used to determine where there are patterns of discrimination;
- Ensure last-minute changes to voting do not adversely affect voters; and
- Strengthen the federal government's ability to send federal observers to jurisdictions where elections are facing threats of discrimination.

A copy of the governor's letter can be found [here](#). The letter is jointly signed by 17 governors from Wisconsin, Michigan, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington.