

# **Disability Rights Wisconsin: Statement from Disability Rights Wisconsin on US District Court Western District ruling: Wisconsin election officials must follow federal law**

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Disability Rights Wisconsin welcomes today's order from Chief US District Judge James

Peterson in Carey v. WEC. Judge Peterson confirms the federal rights of the four plaintiffs and of all disabled Wisconsin voters to receive assistance in returning their absentee ballots so that they can vote without fear that their ballots will be rejected or that they will be sanctioned.

This order confirms what DRW always knew: that voters with disabilities may have assistance from a person of their choice with voting, including with ballot return assistance, and that these rights are protected by federal law.

The federal court required the Wisconsin Election Commission to issue guidance to municipal clerks to clarify their obligation under federal law to uphold the rights of disabled Wisconsin voters to have absentee ballot return assistance. Disability Rights Wisconsin looks forward to seeing this guidance and the positive impact it will have on protecting the voting rights of disabled individuals in Wisconsin. We commend the efforts by the four disabled Wisconsin voters in this lawsuit and by Law Forward who represented them. DRW has heard from voters who are

angry, confused, and disenfranchised because Wisconsin courts and election officials have not upheld the protections in federal law for voters with disabilities.

Those voters should now feel confident to assert their voting rights, which are protected by federal law.

Wisconsin must end these illegal barriers and ensure that the rights of voters with disabilities are uniformly protected and enforced across our state.

Voters experiencing barriers or with questions may contact the Disability Rights Wisconsin Voter Hotline: 844-347-8683 or [info@disabilityvote.org](mailto:info@disabilityvote.org)

Resources: Wisconsin Voters speak out: [“Our Voices, Our Votes: Disabled Voters Speak Out on Voting Rights and Ballot Return Assistance.”](#)