

Common Cause: Critical Wisconsin Supreme Court election and vital local elections demand your attention

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In these first four months of 2023, there are two important election dates: **Tuesday, February 21st and Tuesday, April 4th**. Make a note on your calendar (paper, like mine, or online) and prepare now to be ready to vote in these upcoming, important statewide and local elections. Here are things you can take care of now, so you are prepared for these two Election Days or to cast your absentee ballot in advance. Also, please share the important voting information that follows.

I don't have to tell you how much **every election matters and how state court and local contests have a very direct impact on your daily life**. These upcoming elections will include an extremely critical (for the state and nation) statewide election for an open seat for a Justice on the Wisconsin Supreme Court, and may, in your locale, also include important elections for offices such as City Council, Village President, Municipal and County Judges, School Board, Mayor, and County Supervisor. The more local the election, the more likely the people running in it may be people you know. These local elected positions will impact your public schools, public transit, property taxes, water quality, public housing and private housing zoning, public safety and policing and many other parts of your everyday, daily life. Your vote matters enormously in our state and local elections.

And this year - in 2023 - we will elect a State Supreme Court Justice that will hold this seat for a ten year term. This particular election, which the entire nation is focused on and is watching closely, will have enormous consequence for critical

issues such as voting rights and free and fair elections as well as on redistricting and fair voting maps for state legislative elections in Wisconsin. But it also matters for so many more critical issues like health care and reproductive rights for Wisconsinites.

The outcome of the Wisconsin Supreme Court election (Primary election – February 21st and General Election – April 4th) may very well have a significant bearing on the Presidential Election of 2024. Why? Because Wisconsin, as it has been in every election in the 21st Century, is the most closely contested “swing state” in the nation, and election decisions made by the Wisconsin Supreme Court next year could very well decide who is elected President of the US in 2024. It’s that simple.

And here is “the kicker:” Because this February Primary and April General Election, like all “off year” elections, will draw significantly fewer voters than November elections in even-numbered years, that means when you do vote, it will have significantly more impact and influence on the outcome of the election at both the state and local levels this year.

So please make voting and helping to turn out other voters a priority in the weeks and months immediately ahead. Here is an easy-to-follow checklist of things “to do” to make your voice, and the voices of your family, friends and neighbors be heard at the ballot box this February 21st and April 4th:

☐ **Register to Vote:** You must be registered to vote to cast your ballot in these Spring Elections. [Register online at MyVote.wi.gov](https://www.myvote.wi.gov). The online system to register is open until 20 days before Election Day. After that, you can register in-person with your municipal clerk or you can register at the polls on Election Day. [More information about registering to vote at Common Cause Wisconsin’s site](#).

☐ **Secure your photo ID:** Visit [BringIt.wi.gov](https://bringit.wi.gov) for more information about the types of ID that can be used to vote. Here, you can also learn about how to get a free ID to use for voting.

☐ **Choose the Way You Want to Cast Your Ballot:** Make a plan to vote one of three ways that are available to all Wisconsin voters:

1. With an absentee ballot by mail,

OR

2. In person by absentee ballot at your clerk's office or designated site (aka "early vote"),

OR

3. In person at your polling location on Election Day.

Go to MyVote.wi.gov and [make a request for your absentee ballot to be sent to you by mail](#) *in just seconds*. In Wisconsin, any registered voter can vote absentee - no excuses needed. **Request your ballot for the Spring elections today.** The sooner you make your request, the more likely you are to receive and send back your ballot in time for it to be counted. We suggest you make your absentee ballot request in January to ensure you receive and have time to return your ballot for it to be counted.

You can also go to MyVote.wi.gov to get information like locations, dates, and times, about in person voting by absentee ballot [from your clerk](#) prior to Election Day (aka "early vote") which happens for the two-week period prior to Election Day.

Finally, you can [find your polling location](#) if you choose to vote in person on Election Day. All polling locations across the state are open from 7:00 AM-8:00 PM on Election Day.

☐ **Know Your Ballot:** Get to know who wants to represent you and which candidates best represent your values before you vote. Many local papers across the state will also publish candidate interviews prior to the election. WisPolitics recently held a [candidate forum for the Wisconsin Supreme Court candidates that you can view here](#).

Wisconsin's youngest voters need to stay engaged and should plan to vote in 2023. Are you a public or private college or university student voting in Wisconsin? Or do you know a student who wants to vote in Wisconsin? Here is unique and important information from the Common Cause Wisconsin website to share: [Three Things College Students Need to Do To Vote in Wisconsin](#)

Voting by absentee ballot, having the correct ID, finding your polling place or knowing the voting dates and deadlines can sometimes seem overly complicated and overwhelming for many Wisconsinites. Fortunately, **help is just a call, text, or email away from the following resources:**

Call or text the [WI Voter Helpline](#) at **608-285-2141** and you will be connected to a nonpartisan person who can help answer all your questions. You can also request services such as getting assistance at the DMV to get an ID to vote or having someone witness your absentee ballot.

Voters with disabilities have the right to have ready access to any polling place. This includes the right to use an accessible voting machine, getting assistance marking and returning an absentee ballot, and voting curbside at a polling location. Call the **Disability Rights Wisconsin Voter Hotline** for assistance: **1-844-347-8683**. Or email: info@disabilityvote.org. Additional online resources are also at the [Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition website](#).

If you experience any problems at the polls or have questions, do not hesitate to call the **Election Protection** at **866-OUR-VOTE** (866-687-8683) for support from nonpartisan election protection volunteers. They are there to help you navigate through any doubts or questions you may have.

Plan to vote in both the February 21st Primary Election and in the April 4th General Election! Your vote impacts the future of all of us in Wisconsin. And please share this information with others so they will be ready to vote as well. Many voters are not even aware of these elections and their votes, like yours, will have an enormous impact on your local, state and even on your country's future.