

Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition: Disability Rights and Resources for the February 21st Election

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Tuesday, February 21, is Election Day in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition urges voters with disabilities to cast a ballot and participate in our democracy.

The Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW) Voter Hotline is available to answer your voting questions. Contact the Hotline at 844-DIS-VOTE/ 844-347-8683 or info@disabilityvote.org. On Election Day, staff from DRW and Centers for Independent Living will conduct polling place accessibility reviews on behalf of the Wisconsin Election Commission.

Absentee Voting

Ballots must arrive by 8 PM on Election Day for them to count. If you have not yet mailed your ballot, check with your clerk about where your ballot may be returned. Depending on where you live, it may be possible to return your ballot to your polling place or central count location. Unstaffed drop boxes are no longer allowed in Wisconsin.

If you need help returning your ballot because you have a disability, your rights are protected by the Voting Rights Act. You must be permitted to receive assistance from a person of your choice, other than your employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of your union. This right was affirmed by an August 2022 federal court ruling. See guidance on ballot return assistance from the WI

Election Commission and DRW.

Voting on Election Day

If you are voting on Election Day, make sure you are prepared:

- **Check your polling place** on MyVote Wisconsin as it may have changed.
- **Check your registration status** at [MyVote Wisconsin](#). If you are not registered or your address has changed, you may register at your polling place. Bring a [Proof of Residence document](#) with your name and current address.
- **Bring your photo ID.** The most common forms are a driver's license or State ID for voting. Don't have an ID? Vote a provisional ballot, then get an ID. [Here's a link to the process:](#)

Know Your Rights

Voters with disabilities should [know their rights](#). A voter with a disability cannot be turned away from the polls because a poll worker thinks they are not 'qualified' to vote. Disability or medical diagnosis does not take away the right to vote. Only the courts can take away that right.

To ensure that our voting process is accessible to all, disabled voters have the right to request accommodations. These are some of the most widely used [accommodations](#):

- [Curbside voting](#) is required by state statute for any voter who cannot enter the polling place due to disability. Contact your clerk in advance to ask how to access curbside voting.
- **If a voter needs help marking the ballot, they may have a person of their choice assist them.** That person does not need to be qualified to vote. The voter may bring someone with them or request assistance from a poll worker. The assistor cannot be the voter's employer or union representative.
- **If a voter inside the polling location cannot sign the poll list** due to a physical disability, they should inform a poll worker. The poll worker will write "Exempt by order of inspectors" in the signature space on the poll list.
- **All polling places must have [accessible voting equipment](#) set up and turned on.** This equipment allows voters to independently and privately mark the ballot. It should be set up to allow voters who use a wheelchair to reach the

controls and have an audio ballot-marking option for voters with a visual disability. Any voter may use this equipment.

- **Poll worker may ask voters to speak their name and address.** If a voter is unable to state their name and address, Wisconsin law allows voters to have poll workers or an assistor of their choosing state their name and address on their behalf prior to receiving a ballot. Voters can also provide their information in writing to poll workers or assistors.
- **Other reasonable accommodations can be requested.** Speak to the chief inspector at your polling place.

Reporting Concerns

If a voter experiences an accessibility or voting rights concern, it is important to report it. Report concerns to the Chief Election Inspector at the polling place or to the Municipal Clerk.

We strongly recommend reporting the concern to the Wisconsin Elections Commission at <https://elections.wi.gov/form/report-an-accessibility-concern> or (608) 261-2028. The DRW Voter Hotline (844-347-8683) is available to help voters who have a complaint.

Wisconsin Elections Commission Resources

- [Guidance on Absentee Ballot Return Options Under the Federal Voting Rights Act](#)
- [Election Day Accessibility Checklist](#)
- [Accessible Voting Equipment](#) webinar and resources on accessible voting