

JOINT STATEMENT

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Date: 2.4.26

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Voting Rights Organizations Push Back on the City of Madison's Irresponsible Argument

In response to a suit brought by voters who were disenfranchised in the November 2024 election, the City of Madison is arguing that because the voters cast absentee ballots, they don't have a constitutional right to have their votes counted.

MADISON, WI — The undersigned organizations are joining together to reaffirm our support for absentee voting and to say clearly: **the rights of 193 Madison voters were violated in November 2024 when their ballots weren't counted.** This wrong must be addressed.

Despite the legal nature of the case, the facts are simple: 193 Wisconsin citizens exercised their right to vote absentee – a voting option permitted under state law and actively promoted by their city clerk. These voters followed every instruction, met every requirement, and trusted that their ballots would be counted. Instead, due to administrative failure, their votes were discarded.

This is unacceptable.

We are deeply alarmed by the City of Madison's argument which seeks to evade responsibility and minimize the seriousness of disenfranchising lawful voters.

Voting is a constitutional right. Once a state permits absentee voting, every voter who lawfully casts an absentee ballot has the right to have their ballot counted. Full stop.

“Wisconsin voters should use the voting method that works best for them—whether that's absentee by mail, early voting, or voting on Election Day,” said Debra Cronmiller, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin. “Absentee voting is legal, protected, and essential to a healthy democracy in Wisconsin.”

“We want voters to know that we will fight to protect your right to vote,” said Nick Ramos, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign. “Your vote matters, and you deserve confidence that when you cast a ballot, it will be counted.”

We call on the City of Madison to immediately abandon this dangerous legal argument, take responsibility for disenfranchising voters, and work toward a remedy that respects voters' constitutional rights.

We call on elected leaders across Wisconsin to reject rhetoric that undermines absentee voting and to recommit to protecting every eligible voter, regardless of how they choose to cast their ballot.

And we call on voters to continue making their voices heard by speaking up to local leaders, defending accessible voting options, and by showing up to demand a democracy that works for everyone.

Signed organizations,

Wisconsin Democracy Campaign
League of Women Voters of Wisconsin
Common Cause Wisconsin
ACLU of Wisconsin
All in Wisconsin Fund
All Voting is Local