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## **Affirmation of Voting Rights of Older Adults and People with Disabilities**

The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy. Recent investigations have called into question the voting rights of care facility residents and people with disabilities, including cognitive disabilities. As advocates for people with disabilities and older adults, we affirm these voting rights and demand that policy makers commit to upholding the [state](#) and [federal laws](#) that protect these voting rights.

The undersigned organizations affirm the following:

- People with disabilities, including intellectual and other cognitive disabilities, and older adults, who are citizens of Wisconsin have the right to vote unless they have legally been declared incompetent AND have had their voting rights taken away in court.
- Family members, friends and others do not have the right to assess whether a person with a disability or an older adult is capable of voting. The right to vote may only be taken away by a court, or because of a criminal conviction.
- The pandemic created unprecedented challenges and it was important to ensure that care facility residents were not disenfranchised.
- Repeated investigations of the 2020 election have concluded that it was safe, secure, and accurate.
- If a voter has difficulty reading or marking their ballot, they may receive assistance from any individual except the elector's employer or an agent of that employer or an officer or agent of a labor organization which represents the elector.
- All voters, no matter where they reside, have a right to be free of interference, coercion, discrimination, and reprisal in exercising their rights. No one should ever experience coercion or interference in casting their vote; these concerns should be promptly reported when they occur and investigated by the district attorney or other law enforcement.
- Many voters with disabilities, of all ages, face numerous barriers to voting. As policy makers review election administration, these investigations must also examine if voter rights are protected, including to what extent election officials across the state are complying with laws that protect the rights of voters with disabilities and older adults, and that ensure the accessibility of our elections.
- We call on policy makers to address concerns related to polling place accessibility, accessible ballots, curbside voting, barriers to obtaining photo IDs or to get to a polling site, access to technology and digital literacy, and access to accommodations and voting rights that are protected by state and federal law.

The following organizations have signed on to this statement:

Access to Independence

ACLU of Wisconsin

Action for the Climate Emergency

African American Roundtable

All Voting Is Local

Arc-Dane County

Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin

Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc.

Chippewa Valley Votes

Common Cause Wisconsin

Disability Rights Wisconsin

Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc

InControl Wisconsin

Independence First

League of Women Voters of Wisconsin

Mental Health America of Wisconsin

Metcalfe Park Community Bridges

Milwaukee County Commission on Aging

NAMI Wisconsin

Options for Independent Living, Inc.

People First Wisconsin

Souls to the Polls

Society's Assets

Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

The Arc Wisconsin

Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network

Wisconsin Association of Benefit Specialists

Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers, Inc.

Wisconsin Conservation Voters

Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired

Wisconsin Democracy Campaign

Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition

Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice

Wisconsin Family Ties

Wisconsin Senior Advocates