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## **DRW Commends Stay on Absentee Ballot Return Restrictions**

Disability Rights Wisconsin is gratified to see that the District 4 Court of Appeals has taken action to maintain long standing practices for return of absentee ballots for the Spring election. With the Circuit Court's order stayed, there will be no change to the status quo for the February 15th primary.

A high percentage of disabled Wisconsinites vote absentee due to health or disability related concerns, or other barriers that limit their ability to vote in person. Due to disability, many voters must rely on a friend, family member or care provider to place their ballot in the mailbox, in a secure drop box, or return it to their clerk.

Having the right to request that a person of their choice return their absentee ballot is fundamental to exercising their right to vote. Changing the law for return of absentee ballots a few weeks in advance of the election would have created chaos and confusion and disenfranchised many voters.

The next step will be for the Court of Appeals to rule on the merits of Judge Bohren's decision. During this process, the stay will protect access to drop boxes and ballot return assistance in Wisconsin.

*Disability Rights Wisconsin is the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy system for the State of Wisconsin, charged with protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and keeping them free from abuse and neglect. DRW is charged with protecting the voting rights of people with disabilities and mandated to help ensure the full participation in the electoral process for individuals with disabilities. DRW staffs a Voter Hotline and assists voters with disabilities and older adults, family members, service providers, and others.*