

February 11, 2022

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DRW Statement on Today's Supreme Court Ruling

Disability Rights Wisconsin is deeply disappointed by today's ruling from the Wisconsin Supreme Court which will restrict practices for absentee ballot return for the April 5th election.

Today's ruling does **NOT** change anything for the Tuesday, February 15 election.

Voters may still follow the long standing practices of absentee ballot return for the February 15th primary. These include returning absentee ballots to a secure drop box or requesting that another person of the voter's choice return their completed absentee ballot to a secure drop box, to the clerk's office, or to their polling place.

The court's preliminary ruling will, without explanation, disenfranchise thousands of elderly and disabled Wisconsinites by depriving them of safe, secure voting methods that Wisconsinites have used for decades. Having the right to request that a person of their choice return their absentee ballot is fundamental to exercising the right to vote for many disabled voters. Changing the law for return of absentee ballots in such close proximity to an election will create chaos and confusion and disenfranchise many voters.

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.

DRW remains committed to protecting and defending the voting rights of disabled Wisconsinites. We remain confident that when the Wisconsin Supreme Court fully considers those merits and the rights of voters with disabilities, it will rule in support of these practices for absentee ballot return.

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 full participation in the electoral process for individuals with disabilities. DRW staffs a Voter Hotline and assists voters with disabilities, older adults, family members, service providers, and others.

DRW Voter Hotline: 844-347-8684 / 844-DIS-VOTE