



1-844-DIS-VOTE
www.disabilityvote.org

Voting Rights Advocacy Alert – March 2022

Take Action: Ban on Absentee Ballot Return Assistance

The Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition and our members are very concerned about new barriers to voting rights that are in place for Wisconsin's April 5th election.

Wisconsin voters are no longer able to receive assistance with absentee ballot return. This is due to the Waukesha Circuit Court's order that only a voter, and not another person, may mail or deliver a voter's ballot. The order also prohibits use of unattended drop boxes.

Many voters with disabilities and older adults rely on a friend, family member or care provider to place their ballot in the mailbox or return it to their clerk. The ban on absentee ballot return assistance will make it difficult if not impossible for many disabled and elderly Wisconsin voters to return their ballots in the manner they have used for years. The ban on unattended ballot drop boxes is an additional barrier.

Note: The Wisconsin Supreme Court has scheduled oral argument on this case for April 13. As a party to the litigation, Disability Rights Wisconsin remains optimistic that when the Court fully considers the merits and the rights of voters with disabilities, it will rule in support of these longstanding practices for absentee ballot return assistance.

Take Action Now

Speak out! Share your views about how these restrictions impact the civil rights of some voters with disabilities and older adults, and make it difficult if not impossible to vote.

Share your story about the impact of these new restrictions.

If the ban on assistance with mailing or returning a ballot will make it difficult or impossible to vote for you, for a family member, or for someone you support, **share your story**. All that's needed is a paragraph or two to explain how these new restrictions could limit voting rights. We are compiling the stories of voters impacted by the new restrictions. With your permission we will include your story.

- To share your story or get more information, contact Disability Rights Wisconsin. Email info@disabilityvote.org or call the DRW Voter Hotline at 844-347-8683.

- Note: If you are a voter who needs assistance with absentee ballot return, [contact your municipal clerk](#) and ask for a disability related accommodation. You may also contact the DRW Voter Hotline to discuss your situation.

Write a letter to the editor

Letters to the editor can help more people be aware of how these new barriers are impacting the civil rights of voters with disabilities. Here are some tips:

- Check your local paper’s website for guidance on letters to the editor. Letters are generally limited to 200 words. Some papers have an online form to submit letters.
- Consider sending a letter to the State Journal, since it is statewide.
- If you have questions or need help, contact us at info@disabilityvote.org.
- Please send a copy of your letter to info@disabilityvote.org.

Key Points

- Write a strong opening statement that’s short and to the point – your first sentence should grab the reader.
- State your concern that due to the court order forbidding absentee ballot return assistance, you or other people with disabilities may not be able to vote.
- Explain why it is important for you or other voters to have a family member, friend or care provider mail or return your ballot. If possible, share an example.
- Many voters with disabilities and older adults must rely on a friend, family member or care provider to place their ballot in the mailbox or return it to their clerk. This is a long-standing practice in Wisconsin.
- Federal laws including the Voting Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act protect the voting rights of people with disabilities, including the right for the voter to have assistance from a person of their choice.
- If absentee ballot return assistance is not allowed, it will be very difficult and may be impossible for many Wisconsinites with disabilities and older adults to cast a ballot. We should be making voting more accessible – not creating new barriers.
- If you have used drop boxes, you could share your experience. Drop boxes provide a secure and timely way for returning ballots. Post office delivery times are unpredictable and may not be timely.

Submitting Your Letter

- **Wisconsin State Journal:** Limit of 200 words. Submit your letter online at this link: https://madison.com/forms/online_services/letter/
- **Milwaukee Journal Sentinel:** Limit of 200 words. Submit your letter at this link: <https://static.jsonline.com/letter-to-the-editor/>
- Check your local paper for their guidelines on letters to the editor.