



Legislators' Letter to US Attorney General Brings Attention to Disfranchisement in Wisconsin

ACLU of Wisconsin Applauds More Pressure to Stop Voter ID

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CONTACTS

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MADISON, WI – The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin applauds today's move by state legislators to request action from the U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to "use the full weight of the Justice Department to take legal action, as authorized under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, to ensure that the right of Wisconsin citizens to vote is not abridged or denied on the basis of race or color. Signed by Governor Walker on May 25, 2011, Wisconsin's requirement to show one of a limited number of government-issued, photo identification to vote will cause confusion at the polls and disfranchise elderly, disabled, veteran, student and minority voters.

"Today's letter from state legislators echoes [the call to action the American Civil Liberties Union has made to the U.S. Attorney General's office since July 2011](#). Since then, the ACLU has delivered over 75,000 letters to Holder on this issue," said ACLU of Wisconsin Communications Director Stacy Harbaugh. "The ACLU has taken legal action in Wisconsin and across the country to stop a new wave of voter suppression laws. It is time for U. S. Attorney General Holder to connect the dots between Wisconsin's restrictive voter ID law and discrimination against citizens who face barriers to participating in our democracy."

On December 13, 2011, the ACLU of Wisconsin, the national American Civil Liberties Union, and the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty filed a lawsuit in federal court charging that Wisconsin's voter ID law is unconstitutional and will deprive citizens of their basic right to vote. The lawsuit is the only active federal challenge against a voter ID law, the most common type of legislation that is part of a nationwide attack on the right to vote.

The complaint says that allowing only certain types of photo ID imposes a severe burden on the right to vote in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. It also states that the law violates the 24th and 14th amendments because it effectively imposes an unconstitutional poll tax. The lawsuit was filed on the same day that [AG Holder spoke at the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Austin](#) about the legacy of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the continued importance of ensuring all citizens' access to the ballot box without barriers.

In addition to Wisconsin, six other states recently passed voter ID laws: Alabama, Kansas, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. Other voter suppression measures that have been

enacted nationwide include limiting the early voting period, eliminating same-day or Election Day registration, and restrictions on those who help register people to vote. The ACLU has also submitted comment letters to the U.S. Department of Justice regarding discriminatory voting laws in South Carolina and Texas. The ACLU intervened in court cases in which North Carolina, Alabama and [most recently Arizona are challenging the constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act](#). The ACLU filed a motion to intervene in a similar case in Georgia.

Attorneys involved in the challenge to Wisconsin's voter ID law include Jon Sherman, Laughlin McDonald and Nancy Abudu of the ACLU Voting Rights Project, Larry Dupuis and Karyn Rotker of the ACLU of Wisconsin and Heather Johnson and Karen Cunningham of the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty.

To read a copy of the complaint, go to: www.aclu.org/voting-rights/frank-v-walker-complaint

To read stories about the plaintiffs in the Wisconsin voter ID challenge, visit:
<http://www.aclu.org/voting-rights/frank-v-walker-fighting-voter-suppression-wisconsin>

Take action today: [Ask U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to investigate voter suppression laws in Wisconsin and across the country.](#)

If you or someone you know will not be able to vote next year due to Wisconsin's restrictive Voter ID law, share the story with the ACLU of Wisconsin. [Download our feedback form online.](#)

Social media: Tag this story by mentioning [@ACLUofWisconsin](#), [@ACLU](#), [#VoterID](#) or [#votingrights](#).

The ACLU of Wisconsin Foundation is a non-profit civil liberties and civil rights organization working to protect the rights of Wisconsinites. For more on the work of the American Civil Liberties Union and Foundation of Wisconsin, visit our [webpage](#), like us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on Twitter [@ACLUofWisconsin](#) and [@ACLUMadison](#). Read more news and opinion on civil liberties in Wisconsin on the [Forward for Liberty](#) blog.

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