



Voters Exercised Their Rights, But Dealt With Problems ACLU of WI Reacts to Yesterday's Elections

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CONTACT: Stacy Harbaugh, Communications Director, (608) 469-5540, media@aclu-wi.org

MADISON, WI – The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin worked on Election Day to empower eligible Wisconsin citizens to exercise their right to vote. Today, the organization issued a reaction to yesterday's elections.

"The ACLU of Wisconsin does not endorse candidates, so we did not have a partisan stake in the outcome of yesterday's election," said Communications Director Stacy Harbaugh. "However, we are committed to ensuring that Wisconsin citizens can cast a ballot without misinformation, intimidation or barriers. We focused our efforts leading up to November 6 on educating voters about their rights and working alongside partners in the Wisconsin Election Protection 866 OUR VOTE hotline project and poll watching."

ACLU staffers were among the attorneys who received thousands of calls yesterday from voters with questions or complaints about our voting system. Long lines, confusion over photo ID rules, questions about proof of residency and inadequate staff and ballots characterized most of the problems in the very high-turnout election. While there were complaints about aggressive or disruptive poll observers, serious problems were isolated incidents that were addressed by polling place managers. Ultimately, any barriers voters face on Election Day in Wisconsin lie in our laws and our antiquated elections system.

"After yesterday's election, the party composition of Wisconsin's state legislature and executive branch is still solidly in the hands of the Republican party," said Executive Director Chris Ahmuty. "While we hope to see more compromise and cooperation among legislators on the federal level, we still expect to see more anti-civil liberties measures introduced at the state level. It is our hope that in our purple state, legislators will identify priorities that enjoy bipartisan support. Reducing overincarceration, for instance, would address Wisconsin's disproportionate minority incarceration as well as the strain our prison system has on our state budget."

In Minnesota, voters rejected referenda that would require photo ID to vote and ban same-sex marriage. Wisconsin's voter ID law has been stopped in the courts for now, but the ripple effect of the 2011 law is felt in voter and poll worker confusion. Wisconsin's discriminatory same-sex marriage ban is still enshrined in our state Constitution and a limited domestic partnership registry is being challenged in court. On these issues as well as ex-felon disfranchisement and overincarceration, we can look to Minnesota as an example of a state where voting rights, civil rights and public safety laws can be passed without a discriminatory impact.

The ACLU of Wisconsin has approximately 6,500 members who support its efforts to defend the civil liberties and civil rights of all Wisconsin residents. For more on the work of the ACLU of Wisconsin, visit our [webpage](#), like us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on Twitter [@ACLUofWisconsin](#) and [@ACLUMadison](#).

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