



To: Wisconsin Elections Commission

From: Shauntay Nelson, Wisconsin State Director, All Voting is Local

Date: December 1, 2021

RE: We Must Protect the Vote

Dear Wisconsin Elections Commission Members,

My name is Shauntay Nelson. I am the State Director with All Voting is Local in Wisconsin.

All Voting is Local is a nonpartisan voting rights campaign of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. Our primary mission is to remove barriers to the ballot before they start.

I have worked as an advocate for voting access and voting rights for a long time, and I've seen a great many steps forward and an equal number of steps backwards in this space. I have always supported processes that create, or expand, access to democracy - and I always will. That's why I wanted to speak today on the importance of the WEC and staff in maintaining fair and free elections for Wisconsin. The WEC, particularly its nonpartisan administration of elections and online voter registration, provides essential support to Wisconsin's voters.

I am thankful for the role that the WEC and staff has had in overseeing our elections. From updating the MyVote website with instructions regarding registration and absentee ballots, to processing an unprecedented amount of absentee ballot requests, to providing guidance to clerks on how to run a safe election in the midst of a pandemic, WEC and staff was essential to free and fair elections in 2020. In the last few weeks alone, conspiracy theorists have tried to dismantle the commission's ability to oversee free and fair elections by falsely asserting the commission's authority is not protected by law and launching baseless and harmful attacks on the commission's nonpartisan administrator and members. The attacks on WEC and staff are attempts to undermine fair and free elections, with a goal to bring partisanship to our election process.

It's imperative to ensure that we are moving forward and protecting the progress that was made in 2020 to expand access to the ballot. The WEC plays a crucial role. We need a nonpartisan body to govern our elections and the elections commission has worked effortlessly to ensure that our elections are safe and fair. I fully support initiatives that allow Wisconsinites to have their

voices heard; and any measures taken to ensure we keep and protect the process of ensuring that our elections are accessible to all voters.

If our legislators spent less time attacking the WEC for doing its job, and more time supporting it, we could work together to serve Wisconsin voters by:

- Ensuring we have adequate polling locations open and available to voters on election day.
- Expanding time and hours allotted for in-person, early absentee voting in municipalities beyond the current two-week limit.
- Ensuring the ability of municipal and county clerks to begin counting absentee ballots on the Monday prior to election day, which could prevent confusing and late outcomes on election night.

Instead WEC has come under fire, via a mandate from the Republican lead legislature, for simply doing their job: running fair and free elections.

Now, more than ever, maintaining and protecting voter access is critically important and WEC has functioned with a commitment to maintain a nonpartisan election process where voters have options to cast their ballot.

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Thank you for your time today.