



Legislation Text

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ORIGINAL

ALDS. DAVIS, COGGS AND HAMILTON

Resolution affirming the Common Council's opposition to restrictive voting laws and calls on state election officials to educate the public about the effect of the new restrictive voting laws.

This resolution affirms the Common Council's opposition to restrictive voting laws and calls on state election officials to educate the public about the effect of the new restrictive voting laws.

Whereas, The right to vote is fundamental, and protects and preserves all other civil and political freedoms; and

Whereas, President Lyndon Johnson and the U.S. Congress ensured the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, considered to be the most effective federal civil rights statute, and which prohibits voting practices or procedures that discriminate on the basis of race, color or membership in a language minority group; and

Whereas, President Bill Clinton and the U. S. Congress ensured the passage of the National Voter Registration Act in 1993, which enhances voting opportunities for Americans by making it easier for citizens to register to vote and to maintain registration; and

Whereas, The Supreme Court of the United States, writing through Chief Justice Earl Warren, has said, "Undoubtedly, the right of suffrage is a fundamental matter in a free and democratic society. Especially since the right to exercise the franchise in a free and unimpaired manner is preservative of other basic civil and political rights"; and

Whereas, In 2011, Governor Scott Walker and the Wisconsin legislature reversed the trend of expansion of the franchise throughout the latter half of the last century by launching an unconscionable attack on the democratic values that set the nation apart, and which will restrict the right to vote for all Americans, and in particular minority, young, elderly, low-income, and disabled citizens; and

Whereas, The restrictive voting laws enacted in 2011 include requiring all voters to show government-issued photo IDs in order to vote, mandating that all voters prove their citizenship at the time of registration, repealing Election Day Registration, introducing stringent regulations governing voter registration drives, and reducing the availability of absentee voting - which will impact all eligible voters and will disproportionately and negatively impact the political participation of African-Americans, Latinos, other racial and ethnic minorities, and young, elderly, low-income and disabled voters; and

Whereas, Photo ID laws erect an additional and unnecessary barrier to the voting booth, with significant associated expenses and difficulties that effectively prevent millions of eligible voters from casting their ballots; and

Whereas, Same-day registration laws have made it easier for people to become voters on Election Day by eliminating arbitrary barriers to their full civic participation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Common Council affirms its commitment to increasing participation in the electoral process and to ensuring that all eligible Americans are able to participate in open and fair elections; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Common Council calls on Governor Scott Walker and the Wisconsin legislature to enact legislation that will protect the right of all eligible citizens to vote; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Common Council calls on state election officials to educate the public about the effect of the new restrictive voting laws, and to do everything in their power to ensure that all eligible citizens who want to vote are able to do so and to have their votes counted.

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Rich Watt

11/30/11