



of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

101 East Wilson Street, Room 219, Madison, Wisconsin 53703
Voice: 608/266-7826 Fax: 608/267-3906

October 8, 2014

Re: Public Information Campaign – Voter ID Requirements

Dear Governor Walker;

We write with a sense of urgency regarding the need to educate voters with disabilities about new election requirements prior to the November general election. The decision by the Joint Committee on Finance to delay appropriation of funds for a statewide public education campaign is extremely concerning for our population.

Statewide member organizations of the Survival Coalition report confusion about the new identification requirements and are concerned that the already low voter engagement rates for individuals (statistically 5 to 15 percent below people without disabilities) will be negatively impacted. Specifically our members report dramatically increased calls to information and referral centers about this issue.

The fact that the voter photo identification issue has already been well-publicized in the general media does not address our concerns as we know that people with disabilities require much more detailed information and support during this short timeframe. Media coverage until now has reported only basic information that a new law is in effect and the controversy surrounding that decision. For many people with disabilities obtaining a photo ID will be a time-consuming and costly process (for those who have to arrange and pay for transportation) with the potential for many glitches and barriers. Calls into DMV offices statewide also demonstrate that staff is not prepared for the types of questions people with disabilities may pose.

We support the work of the administration and the Government Accountability Board to establish the [Bring it to the Ballot](#) website. While this site is helpful to many people it can be difficult for people with disabilities to use, many of whom do not have access to computers. **In the absence of additional public education funds and the limits to a public information campaign within this short timeframe we urge the Governor to take a role as a public spokesperson on this issue. By immediately calling a press conference focusing on the *Bring it to the Ballot* resource the Governor can engage the media in publicizing necessary information that has the potential to reach our population.**

In addition, we request that you strongly encourage the Joint Committee on Finance to immediately reconsider their decision to appropriate the funds already set aside for public education purposes. It is our opinion that these funds should be expended now in order to prevent negative consequences for voters with disabilities in November.

Thank you for hearing and addressing these concerns.

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Survival Coalition is comprised of more than 30 statewide disability organizations that advocate and support policies and practices that lead to the full inclusion, participation, and contribution of people living with disability.