



*Representing UW-Madison Faculty.
Strengthening Wisconsin.*

PROFS Opposes Legislation That Would Curtail Voting Access

Members of the Wisconsin Legislature have recently proposed a number of bills that would significantly curtail the ability of citizens in the state of Wisconsin from participating in elections. PROFS is opposed to any legislation that makes it harder to vote, and believes that these bills are not only aimed at curbing citizens' ability to vote but are premised on the 'big lie' that the presidential election of 2020 was marred by systemic fraud. It wasn't; in fact, it was the safest and most secure election ever held, both nationally and in the state of Wisconsin.

PROFS is particularly alarmed by the provisions of some of these bills, which would directly affect the ability of students at UW-Madison, and across the UW System, to vote. For example, one bill (as yet unnumbered) would limit each municipality to a single drop-box for collecting absentee ballots, which would be a disservice to our students because it would prevent the Madison clerk from placing a drop box in the campus area. Another bill inhibits the ability of voters to vote absentee or to provide a photo for an 'indefinitely confined' absentee vote, which would inhibit students on quarantine from acquiring an absentee ballot. Yet another requires absentee voters who've already supplied a clerk an ID for a previous election to provide it for every subsequent election. Other bills being circulated would ban most forms of "ballot harvesting" (whereby a voter may allow someone else such as a campus group to return the ballot on their behalf), ban cities from getting grants from private foundations to help underwrite the costs of elections such as increasing pay for poll workers and purchasing drop boxes. It goes on and on.

PROFS urges lawmakers to build on the success of the 2020 elections by maintaining options for students, faculty and staff to vote by multiple methods and times to suit their situations. Voting is a right for every citizen; we believe that lawmakers should be making it easier, not harder, to exercise that right.

March 8, 2021