

## War on Voting

*The Governor has signed into law provisions that create barriers and prevent people from voting.*

Over the past 5 years there has been an overhaul to the voting process in Wisconsin. From a voter I.D. law to changes in absentee voting to restricting hours of early voting. Governor Walker has made voting more difficult and has used the Republican state legislature to create laws to suppress the voice of Wisconsin residents. As the Equal Opportunities Commission it is our duty to address any denial of equal opportunity to any group or person in our community. The legislation Governor Walker signed into law discriminates against multiple groups within our diverse community in Madison, WI.

According to the Madison City Clerk 113 eligible voters were unable to register and vote on Election Day because they did not have an acceptable form of proof of residence. They counted 41 provisional ballots. That means only 18 percent of provisional voters were able to get an ID to the Clerk's Office in time to have their provisional ballot counted. Forty eligible voters chose to leave the polling place without voting rather than cast a provisional ballot. Forty-one absentee ballots were rejected at the polls on Election Day. The City Clerk counted 572 late arriving absentee ballots at the canvass. Previously, the most absentee ballots counted by the City of Madison Board of Canvassers were 500 absentees for the 2012 recall election. It must also be stated that State law recently changed, and in November city clerks will no longer be able to count late-arriving absentee ballots at the canvass.

The voter suppression laws that have been enacted are working. With even more changes happening before the November election we see that low-income individuals, racial and ethnic minority voters, students, senior citizens, voters with disabilities and others who do not have a government-issued ID, or voters unable to physically show up at their voting location will be discriminated against. As a commission that strives for equal opportunities for all people within our community we cannot remain silent while laws are created to silence the voices of our neighbors, friends, community members and even ourselves.

Voting is a constitutional right upheld by the 1<sup>st</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> amendments. We encourage the residents of Madison to fight against the new laws created to disenfranchise voters in our state, and to become informed of new laws that will be affecting the voting process. The Government Accountability Board is a voting resource for residents of Wisconsin and we encourage that if you have questions regarding voter law to call them at 608-266-8005 or visit their website at <http://www.gab.wi.gov/voters>. We also encourage all residents to know who your local and county clerks are and to contact them with questions as well. Information on county and city clerks can be found through the Government Accountability Board's website, <http://www.gab.wi.gov/clerks/directory>, or by calling them directly at the number above. In Madison, WI you can contact the city clerk at 608-266-4601.

August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 will be the next public election held in Wisconsin. You will have the opportunity to vote on Senator Representative in Congress, Representative to the Assembly, and District Attorney. Exercise your constitutional right and vote.

