

June 22, 2020

Governor Tony Evers  
State of Wisconsin  
Wisconsin State Capitol  
115 E Capitol Dr #1  
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Evers,

It's been nearly a decade since former Governor Walker signed [Act 23](#) into law, establishing one of the most stringent and complex photo ID laws in the nation. As you know, the law compromises the integrity of our elections by creating needless and discriminatory [barriers to the ballot for thousands of Wisconsinites](#), particularly for [Wisconsinites of color, students, people with disabilities, and older voters](#). One of the primary barriers it creates is that it makes the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) the [primary space](#) through which a voter can procure an ID for voting. While the DOT's Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has taken important steps to expand service hours, it still provides limited services in often inaccessible locations. For that reason, we applaud your signing of [Executive Order 14](#) last year, and believe it was an important first step in pushing the DOT to better support free, fair, and accessible elections. Still, the DOT's response left many needs unmet. We write to ask that you take immediate action to hold them accountable to your order.

The DOT's December 20th response to Executive Order 14 did not adequately address what could be done to expand accessibility to DOT services. While it outlined some steps being taken to expand DMV service hours, it missed the larger point of your order and did not take more meaningful action. Yes, DMV service centers need to open for longer hours Monday through Saturday. However, access is about more than service hours.

Limited locations present the biggest hurdle to procuring a DOT-issued State ID for voting. For example, with over 500,000 people, Dane County is home to only [two DMV service centers](#). The locations are [not easily accessible by public transit](#). In this way, their placement presents a frustrating barrier for individuals without a vehicle. This is particularly concerning given [research that shows](#) Asian Americans and Latinx workers are twice as likely to not have a vehicle, and Black workers are three times as likely to not have a vehicle. Furthermore, this is concerning for voters with [travel-limiting disabilities](#). Those voters, with disabilities, who do not drive and do not have a driver's license may need a DOT-issued State ID for voting. While a free ID for voting can be obtained at DMV service centers, it may be difficult to get transportation to the DMV. This is especially true in rural areas with no public transit opportunities and limited hours. The DOT must be more thoughtful about what it is doing to equitably provide services to *all* Wisconsinites.

These concerns are even more serious given dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the [potential for a second wave of COVID in the fall](#), the DOT needs to be particularly thoughtful about how it provides services. It should pay close attention to the needs of [at-risk populations](#) like older adults and people with serious medical conditions. Under COVID-19, these groups face enhanced travel limitations and it can be particularly dangerous for many to wait in service lines. With this in mind, the DOT needs to pay closer attention to expanding service center locations and offer more expansive online services.

As advocates for free, fair, and accessible elections, we ask your office to take the following steps:

1. Hold the DOT accountable for addressing the parts of their response that were insufficient. Namely:
  - a. There was too little discussion on expanding the accessibility of DMV locations.
  - b. There was too little discussion on adequately expanding online DMV services. The DOT must pay extra attention to this need; given the dynamics of COVID-19.
2. Procure a more detailed commitment from the DOT concerning the following items:

- a. Before the November 2020 election, the DOT must improve the accessibility of its locations, particularly for voters in underserved communities. This could include organizing more mobile service centers. Based on their response to your Executive Order, we understand that the DMV already operates 11 customer service centers with no permanent state facility. In these instances, DMV staff travels to communities and organize operations in community centers, village halls, etc. The DOT needs to expand this process.
  - b. The DOT must also collaborate with other state agencies or local decision makers to improve accessibility, before the November 2020 election. For example, this may include working with the Department of Natural Resources-as it issues hunting and fishing licenses, with Health and Human Services-as it provides critical support during COVID-19, or with public libraries.
  - c. The DOT must provide more detailed information on what it would take to create a process for procuring a photo ID online.
3. Lastly, use the powers of your office to establish a working group focused on expanding access to DOT services, particularly for those who have historically faced the most barriers for procuring a photo ID for voting, in advance of this November's general election. This working group should incorporate a plan for long-term success. These actions should not await a response from the DOT to be implemented, but should begin immediately.

Again, the DOT's response to Executive Order 14 leaves many needs unmet. We applaud Executive Order 14; and now ask that you build on previous action and hold the DOT accountable for the goals and metrics outlined in that Order. We all have a role to play in ensuring free, fair, and accessible elections. This is an important step. Without meaningful action from your office, thousands of Wisconsinites could be kept from exercising their fundamental right to vote.

Thank you for considering our views on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

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Organizations