



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

ROBYN VINING

14TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

MILWAUKEE • WAUWATOSA • BROOKFIELD

This is not what democracy looks like
By Rep. Robyn Vining
April 7th, 2020

I am committed to ensuring our elections are both safe and fair, and I believe that in the current health crisis that is COVID-19, an in-person election on Tuesday, April 7th, is neither safe nor fair.

When weeks ago seeing the science behind the COVID-19 pandemic and the very likely implications that an in-person election on April 7th would be dangerous and possibly even make a public health crisis even worse, I began advocating for a vote-by-mail election.

Governor Evers called for a special session to stop in-person voting on April 7th. I supported the governor's call, and I have been ready to vote on this issue, among others, since we first knew about COVID-19, and remained ready to protect the people of Wisconsin by shifting to either vote-by-mail, or postponing the election until after the public health crisis threat of COVID-19 has passed. When Republican leadership in the legislature actively resisted legislative changes to protect Wisconsinites and our election, Governor Evers issued an Executive Order to postpone the election. The order was struck down by the Wisconsin State Supreme Court.

I believe in bipartisanship. And, I believe that in a time of unprecedented crisis facing Wisconsin, we need unprecedented bipartisanship. Being bipartisan in a time of crisis doesn't mean failing to register meaningful dissent. Dissent matters. Dissent is a building block toward meaningful change. And in this case dissent is also registering the voices of the people who are scared, the voices of the people I represent, which is why I shifted last Friday, April 3rd, to voicing my concerns, and the concerns of my constituents, publicly.

I am frustrated that Republican leadership did not act to protect our people. I am defensive of every person in my district who is and was scared to vote: poll workers, voters, city hall workers, the National Guard called in to work the polls and the families they'll return to. I am defensive of my constituents' right to vote, their free and fair access to the polls, and their right to feel their government isn't playing political games in a time of a dangerous health crisis.

Because Republican leadership refused to call a vote to protect my constituents, I advocated that people access absentee ballots. At the time of this letter, we have reports of nearly 10,000 Wisconsinites who requested but didn't receive their absentee ballot. It is unacceptable for the legislature to sit by and watch as people voice fear for their lives when asked to work polls during a public health crisis. It is unacceptable for the legislature to sit by and watch as people voice fear for their lives to exercise their constitutional right to vote. It is unacceptable for the legislature to sit by and watch as people attempt to do everything asked of them to vote, only to be disenfranchised. We, as the legislature, had the power to protect human life, and the constitutional right to a fair election, and the Republican leadership refused to do so.

Democracy serves the people. I will always fight for a democracy that serves the people.

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