



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN EDUCATION NETWORK

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 24, 2012

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Statement on Governor's Comments on Wisconsin Elections

MADISON: In a recent interview with Stephen F. Hayes of The Weekly Standard, Governor Scott Walker insulted our state's many local and state election officials – as well as us voters – by stating that fraud can account for as much as one to two percentage points in a big election. The Governor went on to imply that the reason the League of Women Voters and other good government advocates went to court to block the voter ID law was to encourage fraud.

What did he mean by these outrageous and shameful claims? Was he referring to voter impersonation, or fraud by election officials? Does he think fraud always favors one political party? He should explain himself, and when he does so, he should rely on facts. That would put an end to his claims.

The fact is that vigorous efforts to find fraud in our elections by Attorney General Van Hollen and others have not turned up one case of voter impersonation, the only kind of illegal voting that could be prevented by voter ID. The Attorney General's Election Fraud Task Force found 20 illegal votes out of almost 3 million cast in the November 2008 election, or 0.0007 percent of all ballots – a far cry from the 30,000 to 60,000 votes that would make up the one to two percentage points the Governor attributed to fraud. And not one of those 20 illegal votes could have been prevented by voter ID. They were felons who voted while still under extended supervision. Most of them likely had Wisconsin driver licenses.

The League of Women Voters sued to block the voter ID law because it needlessly disenfranchised otherwise eligible citizens from voting. You could be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age, a resident of the state, not a felon or incompetent – but if you did not have one of a short list of government-issued photo IDs, you could not vote. That violated our protected right to vote in our state constitution. We should be encouraging more citizens to vote, not erecting barriers to keep them away.

The League has placed hundreds of volunteer observers in the polls statewide in recent elections. We have found that most problems stem from human error and, in some cases, incompetence. We should divert the millions of dollars committed to the voter ID program to promoting uniform standards for election administration, with training and accountability pegged to those standards. If we care about the integrity of our elections, we should be willing to invest more in the training and resources available to our local election officials so they can continue to serve the people with the clean, well-attended elections Wisconsin is known for.

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that promotes informed and active participation in government. There are 16 local Leagues in Wisconsin, and membership is open to both women and men. [Find the League on Facebook.](#)