



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF
WISCONSIN**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 16, 2016

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Statement on SB 295 – The Bad Far Outweighs the Good

MADISON – The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin strongly opposes SB 295 and urges Governor Walker to veto it. Although the legislation offers some benefits, the advantages are more than offset by unnecessary restrictions which will make it more difficult for many citizens to register and vote.

Enactment of SB 295 will make Veteran Health Identification Cards issued by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs acceptable as voter photo ID. If we must have voter ID, this is a very positive reform, albeit overdue. With the passage of this legislation, Wisconsin will join more than half the states in embracing online voter registration, making it more convenient for people who are in the Department of Motor Vehicles database to register or to update their registration when they move or change their name. That is another positive reform.

However, no other state that has passed online voter registration has tied its passage to such severely restrictive measures on other methods of registration. While limiting online voter registration to people with a Wisconsin driver's license or state ID, SB 295 unnecessarily eliminates the Special Registration Deputies program under which the League of Women Voters and other organizations have registered thousands of voters every year for four decades.

Other negative reforms in SB 295 include a requirement for absentee ballots to be received by the municipal clerk's office by 4PM on Election Day, rather than by the Friday following the election. In addition, the legislation introduces an unnecessary restriction on who may serve as a voter registrar at the polls on Election Day. This undermines the ability of local election officials to staff their polling places and could well result in longer lines for voters who wish to register at the polls.

Members of 18 local Leagues around the state register voters at senior centers, farmers' markets, community fairs, high schools and colleges – and not just before an election. The League will not be deterred from providing this important public service, and we will announce a new campaign in a few months to register voters statewide for the fall elections. We do this because we know that our nation, our state and our communities are stronger when more citizens are informed, registered voters and active participants in their government.

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League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is a nonpartisan organization that advocates for informed and active participation in government. The League welcomes women and men across the state as members. There are 18 local Leagues in Wisconsin. Follow @LWV_WI on Twitter.