

Go Vote...Even on Saturday

Written by Kathleen Vinehout, State Senator 31st District
Monday, 24 October 2016 15:09 -

http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/voterid_hand-s5.jpg



Senator Kathleen Vinehout writes about voting in the upcoming election. She provides important information for voters related to the voting process with links to help those with questions and contact information for her office if someone is having problems.

MADISON - On a beautiful October Saturday afternoon, my college-student son and I went to vote. Afterwards, I breathed a huge sigh of relief.

Just between you and me, I worried about my son voting. Would he come home before Election Day? Would he know the rules about mail-in ballots?

Mail-in early voting is complex.

You must request the ballot by mail by downloading the ballot request form. [Get the form here](#) . You fill out the ballot request form and make sure you mail it so your clerk receives it by 5:00 pm November 3rd 2016.

Then you watch for the ballot in the mail. Complete the ballot, have it witnessed – with the complete address of the witness – attach a copy of your ID, and mail the ballot so your clerk receives it by 8:00 pm Election Day.

As a Mom, I saw how easily any step of this complex process could go wrong. Call me “Nervous Nelly” when it comes to young family members voting, but it is just too important. Fortunately, Nathan came home over the weekend. I called the clerk, who said, “Sure come on over. Bring your ID.” Together we completed our civic duty.

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Voting on Saturday afternoon was illegal in both the April and August elections. But a federal lawsuit knocked down the restriction on weekend in-person voting.

Weekend early voting is good news for anyone who works away from home on weekdays, or works long hours, or usually votes after church on Sunday.

Early in-person voting is happening all across Wisconsin. Check with your municipality for early voting hours. Rural voters usually must call their clerk and set up a time convenient for the clerk and the voter.

Voters must be age 18 by Election Day, be a U.S. citizen, not in prison or on parole or probation for conviction of a felony, treason or bribery. You also must have an identification card. Much legal attention has been paid to the nature of the identification card and what the state should do for folks that do not have and cannot get an ID.

Acceptable identification cards include a driver's license, state issued ID, tribal or military ID, veterans ID, US passport or Wisconsin college ID. A valid college ID for voting purposes must contain your signature, the date issued and be valid for not more than two years after the date the ID was issued. In addition, students must bring documentation to prove they are currently enrolled.

Changes in state law due to lawsuits challenging Wisconsin's strict voter ID made it easier for people who cannot get an ID because they are missing required documentation. For people without the required documents to get a free photo ID, you can petition the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to verify your identity. It is important to file a petition as soon as possible.

One new law not changed by the courts: local clerks must receive mailed ballots by 8:00 pm on Election Day. Because of the new law, officials are urging voters to mail their ballots at least six days prior to the deadline and some have suggested no later than November 1st to ensure the clerk receives it by the official deadline of 8:00 pm Election Day.

In some rural areas, getting absentee ballots from the clerk to the voter and back to the clerk is

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delayed because the United States Postal Service closed local processing centers. As a result, local mail is slower, sometimes taking several days to travel a few hours away.

All registered voters can vote early, either in person or by mail. Voters can register in person on Election Day. If you are not sure if you are registered, you can check here: <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/UpdateMyNameorAddress>

You can also use that website to change your name or address, find your local clerk, find your polling place and see a sample ballot.

If you have trouble with the website, let me know. My office will be glad to help look up your polling place. You can contact my office toll free at 877-763-6636. You can also contact the League of Women Voters for help at <http://www.lwvwi.org/Vote2016.aspx>

Now go vote!