



**Michael J. Murphy**  
*City of Milwaukee Common Council*

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## **SB324 approval wrong for Milwaukee, wrong for voters**

**Statement of Common Council President Michael J. Murphy**

**March 12, 2014**

Using twisted logic and the power of the majority, the GOP-controlled Legislature in Madison today approved regressive legislation restricting the ability of Milwaukee residents to vote. The legislation ó which also negatively affects voters in other communities across the state ó will ultimately discourage voters (elderly, disabled, working poor, and many African Americans and Latinos) who have a limited ability to vote during normal business/work hours.

Supporters of the legislation (SB 324) claim it was drafted to òlevel the playing field,ö so that communities such as New Berlin (population approximately 40,000) could provide the same access to voting as Milwaukee (population 600,000). They say the intent of the bill is to make it fair between communities, but how is it fair that Milwaukee has to serve more than 300,000 voters in the same amount of hours at one site as Chenequa with 500 voters? If they want to set standardized hours then they should give us the ability to have more than one site. Thats how we are able to do it on Election Day -- we operate multiple sites between 7:00 am and 8:00 pm. This bill is just a blatant attack on votersrights in larger municipalities

To me it is obvious the legislation is meant to rein in successful early voting in mostly Democratic-leaning larger cities, especially Milwaukee and Madison.

So instead of finding a solution to the perceived òlevel playing fieldö problem ó such as finding a few hundred thousand dollars from the state surplus to allow smaller towns and villages across Wisconsin to provide extra voting hours ó the GOP and Governor Walker have chosen to punish hard working urban residents in Milwaukee and other cities.

Worse yet, Governor Walker would rather hold a special session of the Legislature to look at new Voter ID measures that could likely cost millions of dollars to implement across the state (measures that may not even pass legal muster!).

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It's clear that today's vote was meant to suppress the vote in Milwaukee and elsewhere in Wisconsin, and I believe it will be an anchor on Governor Walker's political future going forward as people of color and the working poor will certainly look upon the rhetoric of the Governor's outreach to their communities with suspicion.

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