

**Office of the Mayor  
Mayor Tom Barrett**

City Hall, Room 201  
200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

(414) 286-2200  
mayor@milwaukee.gov



[www.city.milwaukee.gov](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov)

**Council President  
Michael J. Murphy**  
10th District Alderman

City Hall, Room 205  
200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

(414) 286-2221  
mmurph@milwaukee.gov

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**Joint Statement from  
Mayor Tom Barrett and Common Council President Michael J. Murphy**

“Last night, while most Wisconsin residents were asleep, Republican legislators in Madison passed self-serving legislation designed to rake in more campaign donations from special-interest lobbyists and make it more difficult for voters in Milwaukee and other larger communities to participate in elections.

“The proposed change to Wisconsin election law is an attack on one of the fundamental rights of Milwaukee citizens. If the Governor signs this bill, voters in Wisconsin’s larger communities will be discouraged from voting and be forced to wait in longer lines to vote early. It is wrong to target city voters with unnecessary and punitive restrictions on their right to vote.

“This is a not-so-well-disguised measure to suppress voting in larger cities – especially Milwaukee and Madison – where voters are more likely to support Democrats. Additionally, Senate Bill 324 would limit access for people who rely on in-person absentee voting including disabled and elderly people, working and single parents, those with transit needs and African-American and Latino voters.

“It is cynical for Republican legislators to pretend this legislation is about fairness. Based on statistics from the 2012 elections, the City of Milwaukee would have, on average, just nine seconds per voter – an unrealistic rate – to receive each in-person absentee ballot. Long lines and discouraged voters would be the norm. In contrast, voters in suburban and rural municipalities would have rates of early voting that could be easily managed without backups and bottlenecks.

“A simple and fair recommendation, that Milwaukee and other larger communities be permitted to have more than one site for early voting, was ignored by Republican legislators.

“The state motto is ‘Forward’ but Senate Bill 324’s restrictions on early voting move us backward. We have formally asked Governor Walker to veto Senate Bill 324 so that Milwaukee voters are not discouraged from voting.”