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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Bob Donovan
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Alderman Calls On Mayor & Governor To Champion "Common Sense" Election Changes

*MPD Report Points to Need for Photo I.D. Requirement, No Same-Day Registration, Ald. Bob
Donovan Says*

Mayor Tom Barrett and Governor Jim Doyle have lost touch with most city and state residents when it comes to running elections, and that needs to change sooner rather than later, according to Ald. Bob Donovan.

Pointing to a nearly 70-page report issued yesterday by Milwaukee Police Department investigators detailing various problems, errors and irregularities connected to the 2004 election, Ald. Donovan said making changes to the state's voting laws is "absolutely necessary if we are to restore citizens' faith in our ability to run clean and fair elections."

"It's time we restore common sense back to government, and I think repairing our messed up election system is a great place to start," said Ald. Donovan.

Although support for voter I.D. and same-day registration has been sharply divided along party lines, the alderman said he doesn't see it that way. "I know what I'm calling for will cause some controversy, but I don't know why," he said.

"I'm convinced that a vast majority of citizens in this community agree with me on this effort," he said.

Ald. Donovan said requiring photo identification provides "the most basic safeguard possible" for making sure votes are cast "properly and legally." "We don't let people obtain passports or cash checks without first providing photo identification, and to me it makes no sense to allow anyone to just walk up and vote without first showing a photo I.D.," he said.

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Election Changes Needed/ADD ONE

Allowing same-day registration “clogs our polling places with lines of people and encourages and legitimizes procrastinators,” he said. “Registering prior to Election Day was good enough for my generation back in the day, so why not now?” he said.

Absentee voting also seems to have “exploded” in recent years and should be curtailed, Ald. Donovan said. “We have people voting absentee not because they are in a hospital or nursing home but because they don’t want to be ‘inconvenienced’ by having to go to a polling location,” the alderman said. “In my mind that’s not an ‘inconvenience’ -- it’s your solemn civic duty.”

For Ald. Donovan, the key issue raised by the MPD report centers on restoring public trust in government’s ability to conduct elections without controversy and problems dominating the next day’s headlines.

“Conducting fair and legal elections will help restore some of the faith that people have lost in government over the past several years, and I think the common sense changes I’m calling for will help accomplish that,” he said.

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