**CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Wisconsin**

**RESOLUTION TO UPHOLD THE RIGHT TO VOTE**

**Supporting a Constitutional Amendment to Grant an Explicit Right to Vote, Establishing a Task Force on Voting, and Commencing a Call to Action**

WHEREAS, voter turnout in Wisconsin was approximately 70% of eligible voters in the 2012 presidential election, which means about 1.3 million of Wisconsin’s eligible voters did not cast a vote;[[1]](#endnote-1) and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin has enacted legislation (“Act 23”) that could impact eligible voters’ ability to vote, specifically by requiring voters show certain forms of photo identification before being allowed to cast regular ballots;[[2]](#endnote-2) and

WHEREAS, some Wisconsin universities have adopted a policy of issuing Act 23 compliant student ID cards, but only at the request of the student;[[3]](#endnote-3) and

WHEREAS, most other Wisconsin university issued ID cards will not satisfy the requirements of Act 23; and

WHEREAS, a study by the Employment and Training Institute at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee on the diving license status of the state’s voting age population indicated persistent racial and gender based disparities in access to driving licenses;[[4]](#endnote-4) and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin’s Act 23 has been classified as “strict” by the National Conference of State Legislatures, which means Wisconsin is among those states that place the highest barriers to casting a ballot;[[5]](#endnote-5) and

WHEREAS, the legality of Act 23 has been the subject of litigation in both state and federal court;[[6]](#endnote-6) and

WHEREAS, following an initial injunction against Act 23’s enforcement by a Wisconsin district court, the state judiciary continues to evaluate the law;[[7]](#endnote-7) and

WHEREAS, plaintiffs in the federal litigation have raised serious claims as to the racially discriminatory effects of Act 23’s photo ID requirement;[[8]](#endnote-8) and

WHEREAS, of the 199 nations that elect their public officials using democratic elections, the United States is one of only 11 nations that does not have an explicit right to vote in its constitution; and

WHEREAS, the 15th, 19th, and 26th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution provide that the right to vote shall not be denied or abridged based on race, sex, and age respectively, and the 24th Amendment prohibits poll taxes, but these amendments do not guarantee Americans an explicit right to vote; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, the Supreme Court ruled in *Shelby County v. Holder* that the coverage formula in Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) is unconstitutional, thereby invalidating the formula used to determine which states are covered by Section 5 of the VRA; and

WHEREAS, Section 4 of the VRA was an effective tool in curbing racial discrimination in elections in 1965; and continued to be a critical instrument for free, fair and accessible elections, helping block laws making it more difficult to vote for nearly a half century; and

WHEREAS, an individual’s right to vote is a fundamental American right, and fundamental

rights should be guaranteed to all Americans in the U.S. Constitution; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL FOR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, WISCONSIN THAT:**

SECTION 1 – RIGHT TO VOTE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

We hereby affirm that the right to vote is a fundamental citizenship right to be cherished, protected, and exercised.

We call on our members of Congress, and our representatives in the state legislature, to support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would grant an explicit right to vote to every American citizen of voting age.

We call on members of the Wisconsin Legislature to strengthen the right to vote stated in Article III of the Constitution of the State of Wisconsin through statute.

We urge jurisdictions across our nation to pass right to vote resolutions, committing support for an explicit right to vote in the U.S. Constitution.

SECTION 2 – TASK FORCE ON VOTING

We shall establish a Right to Vote Task Force to ensure that all eligible voters in our city have continued access to vote and to:

* Review all local laws and practices that may affect the right to vote in local, state and federal elections;
* Review and recommend changes at the local level to uphold voting rights and increase voter participation;
* Develop plans and take action to promote early registration and make recommendations to the Council on any policies or actions needed to strengthen these efforts;
* Study voter registration programs designed to register eligible high school students and support voter education programs to increase citizenship knowledge and participation in the democratic process;
* Cooperate with any local colleges seeking to uphold voting rights for their students who are eligible to vote in Wisconsin elections;
* Review Wisconsin election laws and regulations and recommend legislation that would strengthen the right to vote in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (municipality name); and
* Review with the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Board of Elections and identify strengths and weakness of our election practices and regulations after the 2014 general election; and

SECTION 3 – CALL TO ACTION

We call on the Wisconsin Legislature to repeal Act 23, which places an undue burden on Wisconsin voters seeking to register and cast ballots.

We call on the Wisconsin State Board of Elections to supply additional voter registration sites in densely populated areas, to better reflect the needs of its citizens.

We call on Congress to restore Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by creating a new coverage formula to determine which states and local jurisdictions should have voting changes reviewed for potential discriminatory impact.

We resolve that despite the obstacles to exercising our right to vote imposed by burdensome laws, we shall make every effort to ensure residents who are eligible voters can fully participate in every election in which they are eligible to cast a vote.

We shall provide suitable copies of this resolution to the governor, our state legislative representatives, the U.S. Speaker of the House, the U.S. Senate Majority Leader, this state’s congressional delegation, the U.S. President and our city and county elected representatives.

1. http://www.jsonline.com/blogs/news/177649551.html [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.jsonline.com/news/statepolitics/122588869.html [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.uwsa.edu/voting/voter-id-compliant-student-id-cards/ [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. http://www4.uwm.edu/eti/barriers/DriversLicense.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. http://www.jsonline.com/news/statepolitics/trial-of-two-challenges-to-wisconsins-voter-id-law-concludes-b99143668z1-232136701.html [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. *League of Women Voters v. Walker*, 348 Wis.2d 714 (2013) [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. *Id*. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)