

TOWN OF HARMONY

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April 17, 2006

Wisconsin State Elections Board
17 W. Main Street, Suite 310
P. O. Box 2973
Madison, WI 53703

RE: Letter from Disability
Rights Wisconsin Regarding
Vote-PAD

Dear State Elections Board Members:

It appears that Disability Rights Wisconsin **is attempting to countermand the Wisconsin State Elections Board's authority** by sending out, what one may perceive to be, a threatening letter to municipal clerks who currently hand-count paper ballots. They also copied it to county clerks where there are municipalities that hand-count paper ballots. Attached is the letter with enclosure received in our office on April 13, 2006 (Pages 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of this letter). You are being provided with a copy of this letter due to the fact that this organization neglected to copy it to you or the list of politicians and organizations listed on their enclosure dated February 16, 2006. Nor did they mention anywhere in their letter that Vote-PAD had a rebuttal to these fabricated accusations stated in that February 16, 2006 letter. Imagine that!

Blatant misinformation such as "Vote-PAD was not tested to show it meets minimum accessibility standards for people with disabilities" ridicules the mock election that the State Elections Board held to test the accessibility of the various voting devices.

"Voters with disabilities who are not able to vote privately and independently using the Vote-PAD **may make a complaint with the federal Department of Justice or they may sue the State of Wisconsin, the SEB and municipalities for violations of their rights**" (emphasis added) may certainly be construed to be a threat as well as the rest of that paragraph.

If these disability organizations thought for a moment they had such a compelling case against the Vote-PAD they would have sued long ago to eliminate it from consideration and not have to lower themselves by sending letters with misinformation and veiled threats. If these organizations were **really** concerned about the disabled exercising their

right to vote **and for that vote to be counted** they would not be objecting to the Vote-PAD, which utilizes paper ballots, nor would they be objecting to a verified vote paper trail.

What has been happening in other states is that lawsuits have arisen due to electronic machines not working properly or recording tallies incorrectly which has disenfranchised numerous voters from either exercising their right to vote or not having their vote count because of programming errors. Cook County, Illinois, as reported in the Chicago Tribune on March 21, 2006 had a major fiasco with the 50+ million dollars they spent on Sequoia machines. "Touch screens were down"; "The memory thingie(sic) doesn't work"; "The names on the ballot were wrong..."; **"I am blind and was looking forward to voting independently for the first time with the audio ballot. However, they could not get the audio ballot to work at my polling place"; and "Nothing worked," said Deborah Stein, a board member of the Chicago Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind in Illinois, who tried to pull an audio ballot in Norwood Park but couldn't"**(emphasis added) are just some of the quotes from the Chicago Tribune.

As to the comment in the letter about municipalities being concerned about the cost and upkeep of a product, you bet we are. Especially when there are all these hidden costs referred to in the Town of Harmony letter to the SEB dated March 20, 2006. Municipal boards are entrusted by their electors to make frugal decisions when spending their hard-earned tax dollars. The \$6,000 federal money municipalities are eligible to receive comes from federal tax dollars. This \$6,000 may initially pay for the voting equipment, but the annual licensing fees, maintenance fees, programming fees etcetera (which amounts to thousands and thousands of dollars every year) will be borne once again by the already over-burdened taxpayer through their county and local taxes.

If these organizations are insistent on each municipality having electronic voting machines, perhaps these organizations, through their financial means, would offer to pay for the upkeep, inclusive of the hidden costs, of the electronic voting machines in each municipality. Then, and only then, should they be able to dictate what voting devices municipalities should not purchase. Except then they would not have the money to pursue the aforementioned frivolous lawsuits. At the very least, Disability Rights Wisconsin should be censured for taking this back-door approach.

Sincerely,
/S/ CAROL LYN SUTO
Carol Lyn Suto,
Clerk

cc: Governor James Doyle
Senator Herbert Kohl
Senator Russell Feingold
Senator Reynolds, Chairperson of the Committee on Labor
and Election Process Reform
Representative Freese, Chairperson of the Committee
on Campaigns and Elections
Representative Gundrum, Vice-Chairperson of the Committee
on Campaigns and Elections
Senator Schultz, Senate Majority Leader

Senator Robson, Senate Minority Leader
Representative Huebsch, Assembly Majority Leader
Representative Kreuser, Assembly Minority Leader
Tammy Liddicoat, Coordinator, ADA Wisconsin Partnership
Tom Frazier, Executive Director, Coalition for Wisconsin
Aging Groups (CWAG)
D'Anna Bowman, Executive Director, AARP-WI
Andrea Kaminski, Executive Director, League of Women
Voters of Wisconsin (LWV)
Mike McCabe, Executive Director, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign
Jay Heck, Executive Director, Common Cause-Wisconsin
Bob Hudek, Executive Director, Wisconsin Citizen Action
Kevin Kennedy, State Elections Board
George Dunst, State Elections Board
Kristofer Frederick, State Elections Board
Diane Lowe, State Elections Board
Ross Hein, State Elections Board
Wisconsin County Clerks Association
State Senator Russell Decker, 29th District
Assembly Representative Mary Williams, 87th District
Price County Municipal Clerks
Alicia Sidman, Disability Rights Wisconsin
WisPolitics.Com
The Wheeler Report
Antigo Daily
Appleton Post-Crescent
Ashland Daily Press
Beloit Daily News
Brodhead Independent
Capitol Times
Central Wisconsin Sunday
Chetek Alert
Chippewa Herald
Clark County Press
Country Today
Door County Advocate
Eau Claire Leader Telegram
Fond du Lac Report
Foto News – Merrill
Green Bay News Chronicle
Green Bay Press Gazette
Holmen Courier
Hudson Star Observer
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LaCrosse Tribune
Ladysmith News
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Marshfield News Herald
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Milwaukee Business Journal
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
Oshkosh Northwestern
Portage County Gazette
Post Crescent
Racine Journal-Times
Record Review
Rhineland Daily News
Ripsaw News
Sawyer County Record
Shawano Leader
Sheboygan Press
Spooner Advocate
Star News
Stevens Point Journal
Superior Daily
Tomahawk Leader
Tribune Record Gleaner/Loyal
Tribune-Phonograph
Vilas County News-Review
Waukesha Freeman
Wausau Daily Herald
WI State Farmer
WI State Journal
Wisconsin Rapids Tribune