

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 20, 2016

The Honorable Brad Schimel
Attorney General
114 East State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Attorney General Schimel,

Wisconsin has a long history of protecting every citizen's right to vote. It was the first state to ratify the 19th Amendment, which secured voting rights for women, and one of the first states to ratify the 15th Amendment, which secured voting rights for African American men. The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy and part of Wisconsin's heritage and tradition. I am concerned that recent developments in Wisconsin undermine this rich cultural heritage and violate the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.

Recent comments made by public officials in Wisconsin suggest that our state's tradition of protecting voting rights is deteriorating and that the constitutional rights of Wisconsinites are being violated. These officials have confirmed that Wisconsin's new voter ID law was designed to prevent certain Wisconsinites from voting. On April 5, 2016, a Wisconsin elected official told a WTMJ reporter that the new voter ID law will help the Republican candidate in Wisconsin during the presidential election. The next day, Todd Allbaugh, former chief of staff for State Sen. Dale Schultz and aide to U.S. Rep. Scott Klug, published an article in which he described attending a closed State Senate Republican Caucus during which certain state senators expressed support for the voter ID law specifically because of its potential to suppress minority and college voters.

These comments clearly acknowledge what many Wisconsinites already know: the voter ID law was intentionally designed to prevent certain groups from participating in the democratic process. This is not only an egregious violation of constitutional rights, but also an attack on Wisconsin's long history of protecting the right to vote. I urge you to investigate these statements vigorously in order to determine whether this legislation was designed to intentionally subvert constitutional rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution.

Sincerely,



Ron Kind
Member of Congress