

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 10, 2014

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Supreme Court Stops Wisconsin Voter ID Law

Last night, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a 6-3 ruling preventing Wisconsin's voter ID law from going into effect for the November election. While the law had been found unconstitutional by a federal judge in April, this order overturned several recent decisions by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, which had allowed the law to be implemented immediately this fall. This ruling is not a decision on the merits of the case, but it will ensure that the State of Wisconsin cannot conduct any election under the law while appeals proceed.

The case, *Frank v. Walker*, was filed by the Law Center, the ACLU Voting Rights Project, the ACLU of Wisconsin, and Dechert LLP, on behalf of all Wisconsin voters, including approximately 300,000 registered voters who lack the necessary ID to vote under the new law, even though they have been voting for years without any issues. Most voters without ID are low income, and a significant number are homeless. Maria Foscarinis, Executive Director of the Law Center, said "We are so pleased that the Court recognized that disenfranchising legally registered voters this November is unacceptable, and we look forward to pursuing further appeals to permanently preserve the voting rights of Wisconsin residents."

After the recent appeals court rulings, the State of Wisconsin began implementing the voter ID law in a rushed and hasty manner, leading to numerous reports of chaos and confusion on the ground. Absentee ballot holders who had already cast those ballots were told that they would be invalid without submitting ID, no voter education campaign was rolled out, community groups were not trained to help their members get ID, and DMV offices did not extend hours so that working people could get there to obtain voter ID. Jeremy Rosen, the Law Center's Director of Advocacy, said "The Court recognized what was self-evident to anyone observing the run up to this fall's Wisconsin general election – implementing the voter ID law in such a patchwork manner would have disenfranchised roughly 9% of Wisconsin voters. It simply could not stand."

A copy of the Court's order can be found at:

http://nlchp.org/documents/Frank_v_Walker_WI_SC_ruling

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The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty is the only national organization dedicated solely to using the power of the law to prevent and end homelessness in America.