
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Milwaukee Youth Council opposes proposed state voter registration legislation

Youth Council members will hold Tuesday news conference on the issue at City Hall

A proposed change to state law that would alter procedures for voter registration of students and staff at public high schools and certain private and tribal schools is being opposed by several members of the **City of Milwaukee Youth Council**.

Several Youth Council members, including Council **President Zach Komes**, will hold a **news conference at noon (12 p.m.) on Tuesday, March 6** in the first floor rotunda at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St. to discuss the state legislation, **Senate Bill 386/Assembly Bill 481**.

Under current state law, the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners appoints a special registration deputy to register eligible (voting age) students and staff at public high schools. Principals of private schools and tribal schools that operate high school grades may also request to appoint a special registration deputy in order to register their students and staff. The proposed new legislation would make these procedures optional.

Zach Komes said SB386/AB481 is “in direct conflict and contradiction” with one of the Youth Council’s key priorities during this election year – encouraging eligible high school students to register and be ready to vote. The Youth Council is currently pursuing Milwaukee Public Schools Board of School Directors legislation to hold voter registration events in high schools around Milwaukee.

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Youth Council/ADD ONE

“The Constitution guarantees the right for high school seniors 18 years old and older to vote, and government has the responsibility to encourage all members of society to participate in the electoral process,” he said.

“Regardless of its intent, this proposed legislation directly disenfranchises the youth vote statewide, and the Youth Council will not stand idly by while thousands of potential new voters are discouraged from exercising their basic right to vote,” Zach said.

Ben Scotty, vice president of the Youth Council, said new voters should especially be given extra attention as they may not be familiar with the process. “Voter education is important so that young voters feel empowered and engaged,” he said. “Ignoring or hindering new voters does not exactly encourage them to be a part of the process of choosing their representatives in government.”

The legislation has already had a hearing and a positive vote out of Assembly committee, and is expected to have a floor vote at some point on Tuesday.

“I strongly recommend that youth and concerned citizens contact their state Representatives and Governor Walker to demand the end to this harmful legislation,” Zach said.