



Election Commission

Commissioners
Stephanie Findley, Chair
Carmen C. Cabrera
Robert F. Spindell, Jr.

Executive Director
Neil V. Albrecht

November 16, 2018

Office of Governor Scott Walker
115 East Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Walker,

In a recent commentary to the media, you identified that delays with Milwaukee's processing of 47,000 absentee ballots on Election Day came down to "incompetence as opposed to corruption."

To make an allegation that Milwaukee's administration of the midterm election lacked competence is unsubstantiated, reckless and damaging to the public's confidence in the integrity of elections. Your claim is particularly egregious given your and the Wisconsin legislature's inaction to proactively address the issue that led to the delay in processing ballots.

Every step of Milwaukee's Election Day processing of 47,000 absentee ballots was compliant with state law and election rules related to election administration. Additionally, observers from your campaign, your political party, the public, and the media were present. At no point did any person issue a challenge to what was occurring. Rather, observers expressed appreciation that the nearly 200 people that supported the City's central counting of absentee ballot operations were well-trained and operated with efficiency, fairness, and transparency.

The two-hour delay we experienced in processing those ballots was attributable to a number of factors, which included the volume of ballots and our need to reconstruct ballots emailed to military and overseas voters, as well as ballots with voter errors or those that had been damaged in the mail or through the sealing of the absentee envelope. The need to reconstruct a ballot is in no way an indication of incompetence but rather a process that occurs in every municipality in this state during the tallying of absentee ballots.

The public's interest in early voting in Milwaukee, in Wisconsin, and nationally, has increased exponentially with each general election. The City, in partnership with other municipal and county clerks, has attempted to work with lawmakers to come up with a solution to the volume of absentee ballots that must now be processed on Election Day. Numerous opportunities to address this issue, such as establishing true early voting in Wisconsin or allowing clerks to begin opening absentee envelopes the day before the election, were presented to the legislature and largely ignored.

The blame for Wisconsin's myriad antiquated election laws that fail to address emerging election issues and lead to delays in the publication of election results rests with you and the legislature, not with the City of Milwaukee Election Commission. Further, I believe your mischaracterization of what occurred warrants an apology to the City's nearly 2,500 election workers that approached their assignments with a profound sense of civic duty, responsibility, and integrity.

Sincerely,

Neil Albrecht
Executive Director