



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

NEWS RELEASE

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Milwaukee Public Libraries to Serve as Absentee Ballot Drop-off Sites and Early In-Person Voting Locations for August Primary Election

MILWAUKEE— This week, every City of Milwaukee household will be receiving a SafeVote postcard encouraging residents to vote safely from their home by requesting an absentee ballot by mail. The postcard will provide residents written and visual information on how to register to vote and request an absentee ballot, encouraging use of the myvote.wi.gov website. Additionally, residents can visit one of eight Milwaukee Public Libraries to receive assistance with the registration or absentee process.

“The City of Milwaukee is committed to protecting our citizens’ right to vote and protecting their health. We especially want to encourage Milwaukee residents to vote absentee ballot by mail because it is the safest way to participate in our democracy while protecting yourself from COVID-19,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “We are beginning the necessary education and outreach far in advance of the August 11 election to ensure everyone has the opportunity, resources and assistance to vote absentee and stay home on Election Day.”

The Common Council’s first action as a governing body in the new term was to unanimously pass the SafeVote program, authored by Alderwoman Marina Dimitrijevic to empower and enable all residents in the City of Milwaukee to participate safely in the fall elections.

“The circumstances around the April election forced thousands to choose between exercising their right to vote and possibly endangering their health. Steps needed to be taken to ensure voters don’t have to face this choice again,” said Alderwoman Dimitrijevic.

The demand for absentee voting has increased since the onset of COVID-19. The April 7 spring election saw 96,712 absentee ballots issued with 76,362—roughly 80% of all votes cast—

returned. To date, the Milwaukee Election Commission has received over 60,000 absentee ballot requests for the August Partisan Primary Election, and over 50,000 requests for the November General Election.

Recognizing some of the mail delivery delays the City experienced in April, the SafeVote plan has also expanded the number of physical absentee ballot drop-off locations at the libraries. Voters can deliver their ballot and obtain a witness signature, if needed. Plans are still evolving to further expand drop-off locations ahead of the November 3 General Election.

“In creating the SafeVote plan, it was important to the Election Commission to ensure that we had community partners at a neighborhood level to provide assistance to voters who might not be comfortable navigating the MyVote website or uploading a photo ID,” said Election Commission Executive Director Claire Woodall-Vogg.

“We have always had a strong partnership with the Milwaukee Election Commission and remain committed to expanding the partnership and voter services in the midst of a pandemic,” agreed Milwaukee Public Library Director Paula Kiely.

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