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Win for Wisconsin Voters in Werner v. Dankmeyer Case to Protect Student Voting Rights

Judge Levine issued his ruling in *Werner v. Dankmeyer* this week, denying the Plaintiff's motion for summary judgment and granting Clerk Dankmeyer and the DNC's Motion for Judgment on the Pleadings. The case was filed to prevent students from voting where they live, study and work. On behalf of The Andrew Goodman Foundation and Common Cause Wisconsin, Law Forward and Bromberg Law LLC filed an amicus brief in the La Crosse County Circuit Court in defense of youth voters explaining that this would violate both the US and Wisconsin Constitution.

"Since 2011, Wisconsin has made it challenging and often confusing for college and university students here to be able to vote because of the enactment of an unnecessarily and overly restrictive voter photo ID law. This significant court victory will help assure that students can continue to fully participate in the democratic process as voters with the same protection under the law afforded other Wisconsin voters, and that misguided efforts to prevent them from doing so will not be tolerated," said **Jay Heck, the long-time state director of Common Cause Wisconsin**, the state's largest nonpartisan political reform advocacy organization.

"The Andrew Goodman Foundation commends Judge Levine's decision to deny the plaintiff's request to abridge the constitutional right of students to vote from their campus addresses," said **Rashawn Davis, Executive Director of The Andrew Goodman Foundation**. "We are committed to ensuring that young voters are able to vote according to their preferences, which has long been the rule of law."

Judge Levine based his ruling on several fundamental flaws in the plaintiff's case: she did not have standing to challenge the recount; she did not exhaust her administrative remedies for her complaints about election administration; and her claims were both moot (too late to address the 2022 election) and unripe (too early to address future elections). The Judge also noted that the plaintiff sought to abrogate the constitutional rights of both students and non-students in certain wards.

"Students have the right to vote where they live, study and work," said **Attorney Elizabeth Pierson of Law Forward**. "This case is a victory for the right to vote and for a free and fair democracy."

Law Forward partnered with 26th Amendment scholar **Yael Bromberg, Esq. of Bromberg Law LLC and Rutgers Law School lecturer**. Bromberg's scholarship explains that the 26th Amendment which gave 18-20 year olds the right to vote and outlawed age discrimination in ballot access, established a protected class – youth – and a protected classification – age – with regard to ballot access.

Bromberg said, "The Wisconsin decision marks a great week for democracy, coinciding with celebration of National Voter Registration Day and the re-introduction of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. The decision affirms the right of youth voters, a protected class of voters, to not be singled out and targeted based on a presumption of nonresidency."

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About The Andrew Goodman Foundation

The Andrew Goodman Foundation's mission is to make young voices and votes a powerful force in democracy by training the next generation of leaders, engaging young voters, and challenging restrictive voter suppression laws. The organization is named after Andrew Goodman, a Freedom Summer volunteer and champion of equality and voting rights who was murdered, alongside James Earl Chaney and Michael Schwerner,

by the KKK in 1964 while registering Black Americans to vote in Mississippi. To learn more, visit www.andrewgoodman.org.

About Common Cause Wisconsin

Common Cause Wisconsin (CCWI) is the state's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan citizen reform advocacy organization focusing on campaign finance, election and redistricting reform, and other issues concerning the promotion and maintenance of clean, open, and responsive government. Working directly with legislative leaders, political experts, other advocacy groups and the media, Common Cause Wisconsin holds their state government accountable, fighting to ensure that their elected officials serve the public interest, rather than powerful special interests. To learn more, visit www.commoncausewisconsin.org.

About Law Forward

[Law Forward](#) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that uses impact litigation to protect and advance democracy. Law Forward stands for a commitment to fair, transparent and representative government; where Wisconsinites can participate in free, fair elections where their vote counts.