



For Immediate Release  
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Contact: [Media@lawforward.org](mailto:Media@lawforward.org)

## **Law Forward and Voter Partner Protect the Right to Vote for Wisconsinites Affected by a Disability**

*Voter Erin Webster Files Complaint with Wisconsin Elections Commission to  
Ensure Voting Access*

On Friday September 6th, Law Forward, representing Erin Webster, a voter, filed a new complaint with the Wisconsin Elections Commission which seeks expedited action to ensure that Wisconsin municipalities including the Town of Thornapple, comply with state law regulating voting systems, including those systems that permit voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently. In addition to aiding voters with a disability, electronic voting machines have been [proven](#) to be more accurate and faster than hand counting. This complaint is in addition to a complaint filed August 26th by Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW), also represented by Law Forward.

"Access to voting is a fundamental right that must be protected for everyone, including individuals with disabilities," said Dan Lenz, Staff Attorney for Law Forward. "Electronic voting options are essential to ensure that all voters, regardless of their abilities, can exercise their right to vote independently, privately, and securely. Without these systems, voters with visual, physical, and other disabilities, as well as those who need language assistance, are unjustly burdened and risk being excluded from the democratic process."

Under both state and federal law, Wisconsin municipalities are required to provide voting systems that enable voters with disabilities to cast their ballots independently and securely. Additionally, Wisconsin law does not permit a municipality to unilaterally abandon such systems without following certain procedures.

Despite these clear legal requirements, and two warnings from the U.S. Department of Justice, the Town of Thornapple has discontinued the use of any electronic voting equipment, depriving disabled voters of the ability to vote privately and independently. This action violates state law and occurred during the April 2 and August 13, 2024 elections, where no electronic voting systems were provided.



"I have been voting on an electronic machine for over a decade, and it is something I have come to trust and expect," said Erin Webster. " I firmly believe in the right to vote and feel that by having no machines available for people with disabilities, it excludes people from the voting process."

The complaint urges the WEC to issue an order requiring the Town of Thornapple to immediately resume the use of electronic voting systems and emphasizes the urgency of this matter, particularly with the November 2024 General Election approaching, and requests that WEC address the complaint on an expedited basis to ensure that all voters, regardless of ability, can participate fully in the upcoming election.

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#### **Law Forward**

*Law Forward is a pro-democracy, nonpartisan nonprofit organization using impact litigation, the administrative process, and public education to protect and advance Wisconsin's fundamental democratic principles, and commitment to clean and open government. For more information, visit [www.LawForward.org](http://www.LawForward.org).*