



For Immediate Release  
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## **Law Forward Argues for Voting Rights In Front of the Wisconsin Supreme Court**

Law Forward Staff Counsel Scott Thompson represented Black Leaders Organizing for Communities (BLOC) before the Wisconsin Supreme Court in *Brown v. WEC*, a case that could significantly impact access to absentee voting in the state. Thompson urged the court to protect the right to vote, emphasizing that voting in Wisconsin is not a privilege, but a fundamental right guaranteed to all eligible voters.

"Voting is not a privilege—it's a fundamental right that must be protected. Our communities, particularly Black voters in places like Racine, deserve full access to the ballot, and that includes safe and secure absentee voting options," said Thompson. "The efforts to restrict these options are a direct attack on Wisconsinites' ability to participate in democracy. We're asking the court to ensure these rights are defended, as they have done in the past."

The case *Brown v. WEC* represents another in a series of attempts to limit access to absentee voting in Wisconsin. On March 1, 2023, Law Forward, on behalf of BLOC, intervened in the lawsuit, which threatens to drastically reduce the number of locations available for in-person absentee voting (IPAV). These attacks are particularly concerning for communities of color; which have been disproportionately disadvantaged by such restrictions in the past.

The lawsuit stems from the 2022 election season, during which the City of Racine—a municipality with a significant Black population—selected dozens of locations for IPAV to increase voter accessibility. After unsuccessfully complaining to the Wisconsin Elections Commission about Racine's practices, Plaintiff Kenneth Brown filed suit, asking the court to block the city's efforts to provide more IPAV locations and declare these practices illegal.

Racine's Black voters have faced historical barriers to the ballot box, and BLOC is stepping in to ensure their voices are heard. BLOC, a leading organization

advocating for the rights of Black residents in Wisconsin, plays a crucial role in the broader conversation surrounding voting rights in the state.

On October 31, 2023, Law Forward filed a brief in Wisconsin Circuit Court on behalf of BLOC, arguing that the plaintiff's challenges to Wis. Stat. § 6.855 are based on misinterpretations of the law and rely on outdated legal arguments. The brief urges the court to uphold municipal authority to designate multiple in-person absentee voting sites within municipalities and reject the plaintiff's attempt to curtail these efforts.

BLOC's intervention in this case highlights the importance of ensuring equitable access to voting, particularly for communities that have long been subject to discrimination and disenfranchisement. Law Forward and BLOC are committed to continuing the fight to protect voting rights in Wisconsin and ensure that absentee voting remains a viable option for all eligible voters.

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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).*