

Recommended by Public Policy Task Force Committee
November 13, 2014: Amended and Recommended by Steering Committee
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Voting Rights Policy Position

The responsibility of choosing leaders dates all the way back to the Torah. In Exodus 18, Yitro advises, "Look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens."

Deuteronomy 1:13 advises: "Choose for your tribes wise, understanding, and experienced men, and I will appoint them as your heads."

Choosing leaders through voting is a bedrock right under the United States' constitutional system of government. It is the means by which citizenry can express its voice and preserve its rights. Throughout our history as a nation, non-Christians, African Americans, women, and others have fought courageously to gain equal access to this fundamental right. The American Jewish community has specifically benefited from full participation in the democratic process. As a minority people, we recognize the power of the vote as the core measure of full participation in our democracy for people of every community. We support the same access for all people.

Full and fair elections require the participation of all eligible voters; measures that have the effect of limiting the participation of eligible voters are inconsistent with our values and should be rejected. While states have an interest in regulating elections to ensure fair and honest results, such regulation should never unduly burden the right of the qualified individual to vote or participate in the election process.

The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation is committed to a fair election process in which participation by all eligible voters is encouraged and facilitated. Therefore, the JCRC supports election laws that:

- Ensure that every vote counted shall have been cast legally;
- Increase access to voting for all legally-qualified voters, and likewise, reject efforts that reduce access, such as photo ID requirements, limited voting hours and locations, and reduced early voting opportunities;
- Maximize opportunities to register and vote beyond standard business hours, including same-day registration.