

AMENDING THE OPERATING BUDGET OF THE COUNTY CLERK TO IMPLEMENT A SURVEY OF
VOTER ID LEGISLATION EFFECTS ON VOTING BEHAVIOR

Over the last five years elected state officials have enacted numerous changes to how elections are run in Wisconsin. Among the most significant are a photo ID law requiring voters to show a qualifying photo identification at polling places, special ID provisions for college and university students, the elimination of voting and registration in the last weekend before elections, reductions in the number of early voting hours, and an increase in the residency requirement for people who have recently moved. These are the most significant changes in election administration in Wisconsin since the adoption of same day voter registration in 1976.

Voter ID laws, in particular, have been shown to affect turnout both among individuals who do not possess one of the qualifying forms of ID, but also among people *with* qualifying ID who think they do not or are confused about which IDs qualify. University students, especially if they are not Wisconsin residents, face particular burdens with voting.

The Dane County Clerk proposes to study the effect of these law changes on voting behavior in Dane County and Wisconsin by contracting with the University of Wisconsin Political Science Department. To date, only anecdotal evidence exists to quantify the effects on voting behavior and the conceptions or misconceptions of voters trying to navigate a slew of new legislative changes to voting.

The 2016 presidential election is an appropriate election in which to analyze possible effects. Presidential elections are the highest turnout of the different types of election (an average of 66.3% of the voting age population since 1984, compared to an average of 47.% in off year general elections since 1990), and tend to bring out more marginally connected voters who are likely to be the most strongly affected by changes in voting practices. November 2016 will be the first general election in which the full range of administrative changes will be in place, and the effects, if any, are most likely to show up then.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that \$25,000 be transferred from the General Fund to account COCLKEL 22776 and that any unspent funds be carried forward to 2017.

AND BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Dane County Clerk enter into a contract with the University of Wisconsin-Madison to determine what effect these changes in state law have had on voting, and which population subgroups are most affected and report back to the County Board with the survey results.