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A resolution by Supervisor Lipscomb, Sr., supporting the enfranchisement of Milwaukee County voters through the issuance of an open letter rejecting the potential purging of more than 200,000 voter registrations in Wisconsin and through the provision of \$50,000 in funding from Org. Unit 1940-1945 Appropriation for Contingencies to the Office of the County Clerk and the Election Commission to supplement in voter registration and education efforts, by recommending adoption of the following:

**AN AMENDED RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, in October 2019, the Wisconsin Elections Commission notified about 234,000 voters to update their voter registrations if they had moved, or alert election officials if they were still at their same address, with the intent of purging those voters who did not respond from the system as part of its typical list maintenance sometime after the ~~2020 Fall general election~~ 2021 Spring; and

WHEREAS, when those mailings were sent to potential voters in Milwaukee County (the County) instructing them to update their voter registration, 34,850 provided no response, 331 requested a continuation of their registration, indicating that they still lived at that address, and 15,479 were undeliverable; and

WHEREAS, on November 11, 2019, a lawsuit was filed to purge these voters immediately and prior to the Fall 2020 general election; and

WHEREAS, on December 13, 2019, an Ozaukee County judge ordered the State of Wisconsin (the State) to remove those voters from the system within 30 days of receipt of the letter; and

WHEREAS, on December 17, 2019, the Wisconsin Election Commission filed a motion to the District 4 Court of Appeals to stay the decision made by the Ozaukee County judge; and

WHEREAS, on December 18, 2019, the District 4 Court of Appeals rejected a request to immediately block the decision to remove the voters from the system, and will continue to consider the issue further after hearing from involved parties; and

WHEREAS, on December 20, 2019, the petitioner asked the Wisconsin Supreme Court to consider the case instead of the Court of Appeals; and

WHEREAS, on January 13, 2020, the Wisconsin Supreme Court decided they would not consider the case, as it makes its way through the lower courts; and

45 **WHEREAS, on January 14, 2020, the District 4 Court of Appeals issued a**  
46 **temporary order to allow it to consider the issue further; and**

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48 **WHEREAS, on January 21, 2020, the petitioner asked the Wisconsin**  
49 **Supreme Court to reconsider their decision to not take on the case and are still**  
50 **awaiting a response; and**

51  
52 **WHEREAS, the District 4 Court of Appeals will make a final decision after**  
53 **both sides file briefs over the next month; and**

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55 WHEREAS, the letters went to about seven percent of the State’s registered  
56 voters; and

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58 WHEREAS, the Cities of Milwaukee and Madison received a combined 27  
59 percent of those letters, although only account for 14 percent of the State’s total  
60 registered voters; and

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62 WHEREAS, the City of Milwaukee Election Commission Executive Director Neil  
63 Albrecht said 35,343 people in the City of Milwaukee were “supposedly” sent a letter  
64 regarding their registration; and

65  
66 WHEREAS, Mr. Albrecht also noted that the City of Milwaukee found 600  
67 instances in which the State had flagged a Milwaukee voter as having moved, but  
68 property records show that the person still owns the property; and

69  
70 WHEREAS, an additional 2,000 voters’ surnames matched the surname of the  
71 property owner at their listed address, indicating that they could be a potential family  
72 member of the property owner and still residing at the address; and

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74 WHEREAS, the Cities of Milwaukee and Madison are municipalities that typically  
75 lean towards Democratic candidates; and

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77 WHEREAS, purging the voter rolls ahead of a major 2020 election season could  
78 disenfranchise voters who were either not aware that their registration had been purged,  
79 or did not have the resources to update their registration in advance of the purge; and

80  
81 WHEREAS, the County leaders and citizens have been outspoken in their  
82 disagreement over the decision to purge the voter rolls, and have staged protests in City  
83 Hall to draw attention to the disparate effect that the purging of registrations will have in  
84 the County, especially against those that are already at risk of disenfranchisement; and

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86 WHEREAS, in 2016, the County Clerk and County Election Commission  
87 undertook a “Bring It to the Ballot” Voter Identification Campaign to encourage  
88 individuals to vote and informing them of the proper paperwork necessary to register;  
89 and

90 WHEREAS, the campaign included advertising at local movie theaters, outdoor  
91 advertising on transit shelters, and inside buses throughout the County, print  
92 advertisements in local newspapers, and radio advertisements on local stations; and  
93

94 WHEREAS, the County Clerk and County Election Commission plan to  
95 reproduce those efforts for both the 2020 Spring and Fall election cycles; and  
96

97 WHEREAS, the City of Milwaukee, County Clerk, and County Election  
98 Commission have also deployed several voter registration kiosks throughout the  
99 County, including at City Hall, the Young Women’s Christian Association, all City of  
100 Milwaukee public libraries, County senior centers, some suburban public libraries, and  
101 in the jury management room at the County Courthouse, among other locations; and  
102

103 WHEREAS, the kiosks connect voters to the correct website where they can print  
104 out registration forms, make a copy of their identification, and provide instructions on  
105 document submission; and

106 WHEREAS, voter suppression in the State is a recurrent issue, with a 2011 voter  
107 identification law resulting in nearly 17,000 registered State voters deterred from voting  
108 in the 2016 fall election; and  
109

110 WHEREAS, voter suppression often disproportionately affects lower-income and  
111 black voters more than their higher-income and white counterparts; and  
112

113 WHEREAS, purging over 200,000 voter registrations could keep from the polls  
114 those individuals who are already at risk of not being able to vote; and  
115

116 WHEREAS, the County should promote and empower its citizens to vote, and  
117 encourage the enfranchisement of every individual able to vote; and  
118

119 WHEREAS, the Committee on Finance and Audit, at its meeting of  
120 January 30, 2020, recommended adoption of File No. 20-146 as amended (vote 6-0);  
121 now, therefore,  
122

123 BE IT RESOLVED, Milwaukee County (the County) supports the  
124 enfranchisement of its voting citizens, and is opposed to the purging of over 200,000  
125 voter registrations; and  
126

127 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, a transfer of \$50,000 from Org. Unit 1940-1945  
128 Appropriation of Contingencies is provided to Org. Unit 3270 Office of the County Clerk  
129 (County Clerk) and the County Election Commission (Election Commission), for the  
130 purposes of voter registration and education outreach; and  
131

132 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Clerk and the Election Commission  
133 will provide a report to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors indicating current  
134 voter registration and education efforts in advance of the 2020 Spring and Fall elections,  
135 as well as, additional efforts that can be made, which include, but are not limited to  
136 direct mailings to potential purged voters with instructions on updating their voter status,  
137 additional voter registrations kiosks placed throughout the County, partnerships with  
138 voter outreach groups, and voter registration drives; and

139

140 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Office of Corporation Counsel (Corporation  
141 Counsel), working in conjunction with the County Clerk and Election Commission, and  
142 the Research Services Division, Office of the Comptroller, is requested to compose an  
143 open letter on behalf of the County denouncing the potential purge of over 200,000  
144 State of Wisconsin voters; and

145

146 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the letter shall provide information regarding voter  
147 disenfranchisement in the County, and be made available to the public through  
148 Corporation Counsel, the County Clerk, and Election Commission; and

149 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the letter shall also be made available to the  
150 relevant courts during their deliberations on the potential voter purges.

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srb  
01/30/2020  
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