

September/October 2016

2016 General Election - Nov. 8, 2016

Are you Ready?



The General Election will be held **Tuesday, November 8, 2016 from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m.** A lot is at stake in this election. Wisconsin voters will be casting ballots for President, U.S. Senator, Representatives in Congress, State Senators in even-numbered districts, State Assembly Representatives in all 99 Districts and all District Attorneys. In addition, voters will be making decisions about who will fill a variety of local elected positions and in some areas will also be asked to weigh in on a local referendum.

Voting is a powerful way for citizens to participate in their government. The decisions made by public officials directly influence our lives and the lives and well-being of all citizens. Voting is an opportunity to elect officials that are in tune with our values and goals, as well as the wishes and concerns of all citizens in the official's district.

Do you have what you need to vote in this election? Do you know where to go to vote and what will be on your ballot? To answer these questions and more, check out these resources:

- <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/> - information on voter registration and acceptable photo IDs for voting, **important deadlines** for early and absentee voting, locations of polling sites and **learn what will be on your ballot**
- <http://www.commoncausewisconsin.org/p/voting-resources.html> - offers a variety of **voting resources** including a guide for early absentee voting and voter ID fact sheets. **For those needing a ride to the polls - a list of organizations/individuals around the state who have offered to provide free rides** to the polls on Election Day and/or during the early voting period go to:

<http://www.commoncausewisconsin.org/p/free-rides-to-polls.html>

The Wisconsin Elections Commission website includes links to a **printable version of a palm card** (brochure) which contains information on **how someone can get a free state of Wisconsin ID card or a document that can be used for voting** after one visit to a Division of Motor Vehicles office, **even if they do not have a birth certificate or other documentation.** The document is valid for 180 days. Printable palm cards are located at:

- http://elections.wi.gov/sites/default/files/publication/137/idpp_palm_card_10_14_2016_pdf_25712.pdf (English)
- http://elections.wi.gov/sites/default/files/publication/137/idpp_palm_card_spanish_10_14_2016_pdf_11063.pdf (Spanish)

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is **seeking volunteers willing to complete a 60-minute online training and then serve as nonpartisan election observers** at polling sites near their homes. Election observers will be trained to monitor the way Wisconsin's new election laws and procedures are being applied. If interested complete the online Election Observer Volunteer Form located at:

<http://www.lwvwi.org/Vote2016/ElectionObserverVolunteerForm.aspx>

If you or someone you know would like to **offer free rides** to the polls for people in your community **send an email ASAP to: smiller@commoncause.org** .

Most importantly **get out and vote and encourage others to do the same!**

DHS Delays Disenrollment for Non-Compliance with New IRIS 40-Hour Health and Safety Policy



The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has been in the process of implementing a new 40-Hour Health & Safety Assurance Policy related to the number of hours a caregiver can work per week for a participant in the IRIS (Include, Respect, I Self-Direct) self-directed long-term supports program. **Initially, anyone receiving more than 40 hours of care per week from one caregiver was directed to bring their plan into compliance with the new policy** (by hiring additional caregivers so no one caregiver is working more than 40 hours/week) **by Oct. 15, 2015 or be disenrolled** from the program. Despite the exception (both continuous/ongoing and short-term/unplanned or unique) provisions included in the policy to address situations in which no caregiver or qualified (to meet complex care needs) caregiver is available in the area or to cover emergency situations, etc., **DHS continues to receive feedback from IRIS participants most affected by the rule change and is now working on additional revisions to the policy. With additional changes in progress, DHS is delaying disenrollment for non-compliance with the policy until further notice.**

Technically the policy does not reduce the hours of care authorized for an IRIS participant, but was intended to ensure the health and safety of IRIS participants and their caregivers. Participants and advocates are recommending DHS work with stakeholders (participants, family caregivers, home care agencies, IRIS Consultant Agency representatives, IRIS Advisory Council members and advocates) on the health and safety policy changes.

When the health and safety policy is finalized, DHS will be in communication with IRIS participants and consultants.

Aging Advocacy Day 2017!

**Mark your calendars - Wed. May 17, 2017 in
Madison. Make plans to be there!**

Congress Passes Short-Term Spending Bill to Avoid Partial Government Shutdown

Just days before the end of the federal fiscal year (Sept. 30), **both houses of Congress passed and President Obama signed into law a short-term (10-week) spending bill (continuing resolution) to keep the government funded through Dec. 9, 2016.**

A Continuing Resolution (CR) generally funds programs at prior fiscal year levels during the duration of the short-term bill and prevents any proposed policy or funding changes for the new fiscal year from being implemented. However, a few exceptions were included in this spending agreement to respond to current national challenges such as the Zika virus and flooding, as well as full-year funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs. In addition, cost-savings measures put in place in FY 2016 do not carry forward in the next fiscal year; therefore, spending level adjustments had to be made to account for these increased costs. As a result, the short-term spending bill makes a 0.5 percent across-the-board cut to all funding levels (overall funding levels may be adjusted if Congress passes the remaining 10 funding bills when the return later this fall).

Members of Congress will remain in recess until Nov. 13th. After the Nov. election, the House and Senate are expected to restart talks on a final FY 2017 federal budget. Continue to **contact your Members of Congress (<https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>) and let them know increased funding is needed for all Older Americans Act programs, especially Title III B Supportive Services, Title VI Native American Aging Programs, National Family Caregiver Support Programs and Title VII Long-Term Care Ombudsman—to at least pre-sequestration levels of FY 2010.**

While your Members of Congress are in Wisconsin, educate them about these important aging services programs, the older adults who rely on them and the funding required to address increasing needs.