

Our freedom to vote, and to have our votes counted, is under threat

The federal government is moving to interfere in how elections are run, even though states have administered their own elections since the founding. An April 27 Reuters investigation, "How Trump is moving to control US elections, one state at a time," documented federal authorities — the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security — fanning out across the country, "seeking confidential records, pressing for access to voting equipment and re-examining voter-fraud cases that courts and bipartisan reviews have already rejected."

Examples of federal interference already this year:

- Baseless claims of stolen elections and investigations — without charges — into organizations that run voter registration drives, especially in Black and immigrant communities.
- Justice Department officials seeking access to Dominion voting machines in Missouri, and CISA officials seeking the same in Colorado.
- Demands for voter rolls and lists of voters flagged as "likely non-citizens" — but on review by county clerks, the flagged names were all eligible citizens. As one Republican county clerk put it: "It looks like if you have too many vowels in your name, you show up on a list."
- A March 31 executive order directing the Postal Service to manage access to mail-in ballots and directing DHS to build a list of who may receive them — excluding others. By late April the administration was suing 30 states for access to their voter rolls.
- Demands for 2020 voting records in jurisdictions across the country.

In Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Elections Commission oversees the elections statewide, but local elections are overseen by county and municipal clerks. County Clerk Regi Waligora is ultimately responsible for ensuring the voter registration records are properly kept, polling places are efficient, ballots are counted correctly and promptly, and results are properly certified in Kenosha County.

We are a part of the national Faith in Us Initiative, and we would like Ms. Waligora to know that we support her, but as the people who elected her, we will hold her accountable for protecting the right of all legal voters to vote without interference or intimidation and to ensure that all votes are counted.

We expect Ms. Waligora to pledge that she and the polling officers of Kenosha County who answer to her will:

1. Abide by the U.S. Constitution and state election laws.
2. Refuse to comply with any unlawful executive orders or data requests that seek to restrict voting, and
3. Faithfully play their role to certify and seat the rightfully elected winners this November—regardless of party.

The right to vote is fundamental to all our other rights. Our ability to make change at every level depends on the people getting to choose who represents us. This call to action will be shared widely with media outlets in Kenosha County and beyond.

Signed,

Governing Board of Congregations United to Serve Humanity (CUSH)
Justine Hamelev-Jones, President

Religious Leaders Caucus (RLC) of Congregations United to Serve Humanity (CUSH)
Rev. Wesley Isberner, Chair of RLC