

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Statement: Decision on Prohibiting Witness Certificate Corrections**

MADISON, WI—The Wisconsin Interfaith Voter Engagement Campaign (WIVVEC), co-led by Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice and the Wisconsin Council of Churches, issued the following statement in response to the decision by a Waukesha County Judge in *White vs. WEC* that would prevent clerks from filling in incomplete addresses on witness certificates:

In Wisconsin, absentee voters are required to complete their ballot in front of a witness, who must then include their address on the witness certificate. Now, if the witness makes an unintentional mistake on the certificate - like a missing or incomplete zip code - our local clerks will no longer be able to make these minor corrections using publicly available information.

Particularly in light of this ruling, WIVVEC advises absentee voters to follow the directions carefully when voting and to double-check the witness certificate before returning their ballot to the clerk to ensure that their voice is heard.

"As people of faith, we recognize the need to make allowances for human imperfection," said Dr. Peter Bakken, Justice and Witness Coordinator for the Wisconsin Council of Churches. "This harsh decision imposes a consequence far out of proportion to a minor mistake. Some people's votes will not be counted because they made an insignificant error, the kind of mistake any one of us might make from time to time."

"This decision is extremely disappointing and has the potential to result in the disenfranchisement of a significant number of Wisconsin voters," said Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Executive Director of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice. "We believe the right to vote is sacred. We will continue to work diligently to help support and inform voters about all the required steps necessary to exercise their Constitutional right to vote."

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*Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice is a nonpartisan interfaith education and advocacy organization that reaches out to clergy and faith communities to provide training, resources, and tools to be effective advocates for social and economic justice in Wisconsin.*

*The Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) is a network of Christian churches and faith-based organizations committed to working together across our many differences. Exercising holy imagination, we help each other make courageous choices that lead toward peace with justice, the vitality of the church, and the well-being of our neighbors.*