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PHOTO GALLERY

Long Lines at Milwaukee's Polling Places

Voters turn out to vote in-person, most wearing masks. See our photos.

By Jeramey Jannene - Apr 7th, 2020 03:01 pm

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A voter waiting in line at Washington High School. Photo by Jeramey Jannene.

"We have moved forward with an election, we have not moved forward with democracy in the state of Wisconsin," said Milwaukee Election Commission Executive Director **Neil Albrecht** during a press briefing at 11:00 a.m.

Turnout data wasn't immediately available, but visiting each of the city's five polling places revealed long lines (see photos below). "I can report turnout has been robust," said Albrecht.

In interviews with voters, Urban Milwaukee learned of wait times ranging from 20 to 40 minutes at Hamilton High School on the southwest side to over two hours at Riverside High School. As of 3:30 p.m. the line of cars outside the Riverside parking lot was backed up across the river and continuing west two blocks into Riverwest, mostly cars with people looking to vote.

"It's unfortunate that wait time is so significant. This is nothing I would have hoped for in the city of Milwaukee, but it is absolutely important we operate these sites in a manner that ensures safety," said Albrecht.

Each polling place has between 80 to 100 city poll workers, many of whom are city employees, and approximately 30 members of the Wisconsin National Guard. The National Guard members serve as a supplemental workforce. "They have been phenomenal to work with," said Albrecht.

The city normally operates with over 1,400 poll workers and 180 sites, but reduced that to five after reporting a shortage of more than 1,000 poll workers.

Why couldn't the city increase the number of polling places since the National Guard provided additional workers? "We did not know how many National Guard members would be available," said Albrecht. He said the city received 170 members of the 500 it requested. The city had first raised the issue three weeks ago, but Governor **Tony Evers** didn't announce the decision to use the National Guard members until a week ago. "Had we had that information sooner I absolutely believe that would have impacted the number of polling sites in Milwaukee."

Milwaukee wasn't alone. The City of Waukesha cut its polling sites from 15 to one and Green Bay went from 31 to two. The City of Madison, the second largest city in the state, managed to open 66 of its 92 polling locations and is not reporting long times at the time of publication.

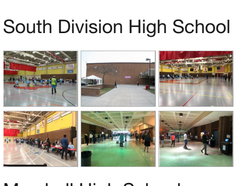
Albrecht praised the poll workers that are working. "I believe they are the true heroes of the very unfortunate decision that happened yesterday to move forward with this election," said Albrecht.

"I believe there are many injustices in this election," said Albrecht. He said the issue extends beyond the difficulties of doing in-person voting to the "tens of thousands" voters that have various issues with their absentee ballots.

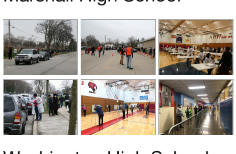
The polls are open until 8 p.m.

Photos of each of the polling sites show the scene throughout the morning. Line size is hard to judge because depending on the layout of the school, lines could have been inside, outside or both.

South Division High School



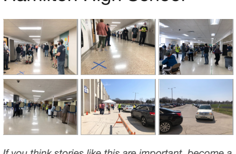
Marshall High School



Washington High School

Riverside High School

Hamilton High School



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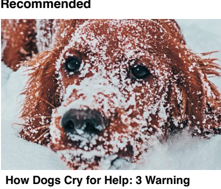

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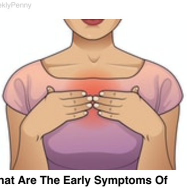

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ONE THOUGHT ON "PHOTO GALLERY: LONG LINES AT MILWAUKEE'S POLLING PLACES"

1. **steenwyr says:**
   April 7, 2020 at 5:07 pm

   I voted absentee weeks ago, so don't know…how did people find their polling place? Were there signs and redirects where all the closed ones would have been? Probably could've been looked up on internet or found via phone call, but even that creates a gap for some…

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