**File: 6.13.2024\_Erin\_Whitney\_UEC\_MKE\_Elevate.mp3**

**Interviewer:**  **Sonya Green**

**Interviewee: Erin Whitney**

**Date of Interview: 06/13/24**

**Location: Urban Ecology Center, Milwaukee, WI**

**Event: UEC MKE Elevate**

**List of Acronyms: EW: Erin Whitney, IN: Interviewer**

IN: Could you please tell me your name and spell it for me.

EW: Hey, I'm Erin Whitney. Erin, we're starting that over. Hey, I'm Erin Whitney. E-R-I-N W-H-I-T-N-E-Y.

IN: Awesome. So, let's, I'm sorry to see that- steal that list from you. Our first question is: when you think about the process of voting in the United States, where would you say you are on the scale between trust and distrust? So, a zero would be absolutely no trust in the system, a full ten would be full and complete trust in the system.

EW: We're shooting, we're shooting for an 8.5 here. I think also we could go into what parts of the system I trust and distrust, but if I'm thinking of my general idea of the voting system, I'm at an 8 1/2.

IN: Can you share the story of why you picked that spot, or possibly why you feel your trust is at an 8.5?

EW: Now, yeah, I think if I'm thinking that honestly, well, democracy, what that really means has shifted a lot since 2016. I think in the voting system of sometimes working in a polling place, seeing how my neighbors go out and vote, how we engage, how we, like, look forward to this day, how we, like, let our other neighbors know, like, it's time to go out. I really have a lot of trust in that. That feels right to me. When I think about the system in the form of how candidates have access to be a candidate that's successful and put on the ballot that does not feel at that 8 1/2 or the way that candidates can use funding does not feel that that 8 1/2 or the way sometimes we will specifically alter language on ballots in the favor of one agenda does not feel trustworthy, but as far as that first part of I put my pallet ballot in a box where it- yeah 8.5.

IN: Where would you like to be on this scale ideally?

EW: Yeah. I mean, 10 would be A+... would be great.

IN: Can you imagine the conditions in which you could be there? How you could how we can improve the conditions of being there.

EW: I mean. Kind of going back to that yeah, we just kind of, yeah, I guess we just kind of talked about it. So yeah, I don't know if I have too much more than that.

IN: Is there anything else you would like to add to that?

EW: About voting in Milwaukee? Am I supposed to teach a kid or have a kid teach me?

IN: Yeah, we can absolutely do that... So, all you have to do is answer three questions. First, I'm sorry, what is voting?

EW: Voting is saying looking and doing research and seeing who do you want to work for you and represent you and the decisions that impact your life.

IN: How do you how do you vote? How do you do it?

EW: You do a little research, maybe even before that, you kind of look into your community of, like, who do you want representing you even for local elections and then kind of part of it I think goes further than the day of, of, like, talking to your neighbors and friends of, like, “These folks are going to impact the way we live our years or this term.” And then you get ready for the day you're going to go to your election space after you've pre registered, hopefully, or you can register day of in Wisconsin, and then you're going to circle your favorite candidates and the folks who are going to do a good job and then you enter your ballot and your vote counts.

IN: Why should we vote? Or, yeah, why? Why should we do it?

EW: I want to make sure that I'm putting the people who are going to keep me and people, especially people around me, safe. Understanding of how I might exist or just, like, keep coasting in my identities may not be the same for some of my neighbors, so, if I care, I'm going to make sure that I'm voting to put the people that are gonna do a good job and the right things in office, local or large.

IN: Absolutely. Bonus question, will you vote? Why or why not?

EW: I will vote because of all the above.

IN: Are there any questions we can answer? For you about voting.

EW: I can't think of anything right now.

IN: That's great. Thank you.