

# Eau Claire County Democratic Party

# September 2011 News



## Democratic Party Resource Center

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Office Hours: Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### Democratic Party General Meeting

Thursday, September 22, 7 p.m.  
Democratic Resource Center



General party meetings open to the public.  
Only members may vote.

### An Evening With Jeff Smith

Have you been wondering where former 93rd Assembly Representative Jeff Smith has been and what he's been up to this past few months? Well get on over to The Bullfrog Fish Farm and ask him!

Come join fellow progressives, sway to good music and partake of some snacks while Jeff tells tales of his adventurous sabbatical from politics that landed him in the most unlikely place: smack dab in the middle of, well, more politics!

No admission charged, but donations to Jeff's mighty cause are welcome and encouraged, as are purchases of additional food and beverage from the Farm.

**Join Jeff Saturday, September 17th, at:  
The Bull Frog Fish Farm in Dunn County  
N1321 Bullfrog Road, Menomonie, WI  
5:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

### FightingBobFest

Saturday, September 17, Alliant Center, Madison  
(No longer in Baraboo)

If you will be at Bobfest and could help out for an hour or two at our Bobfest North booth, please call Carolyn Dunning ([715-529-0864](tel:715-529-0864)).

Speakers include: Tammy Baldwin, Jim Hightower, Dave Obey, Dennis Kucinich, John Nichols, and many more.

<http://www.fightingbobfest.org/>

### Calendar of Events

Sat., 9/17 10 a.m.-6 p.m.	International Fall Festival Downtown Eau Claire
Sat., 9/17 5-7:30 p.m.	An Evening With Jeff Smith Bull Frog Fish Farm
Sat., 9/17	FightingBobFest Alliant Center, Madison WI
Mon., 9/19 6-9 p.m.	Corn Roast With Ron Kind LaCrosse County Fair Grounds West Salem WI
Thur., 9/22 7 p.m.	Membership Meeting Democratic Resource Center

### International Fall Festival

**Saturday, September 17, 2011  
10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Downtown Eau Claire**

**The Eau Claire County Democratic Party  
will again march in the parade and also  
have a booth outside our Resource Center.**

**Parade line up at 2:30 p.m.  
at Wilson Park, Barstow Side  
Parade—3:00 p.m.**

**From Wilson Park to  
the bridge near the Post Office  
Kathleen Vinehout will join us for the parade!**

**Wear your Blue Dems Shirt or any blue shirt**

**Let the Resource Center know if you are willing  
to spend an hour or two staffing our booth.**

**Call 715-852-0330**

**Booth set-up begins at 8:00 a.m.  
Shifts: 9 – 11 a.m., 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.,  
1 – 3 p.m., 5 – 6 p.m.**

**Sponsored by Downtown Eau Claire, Inc. (DECI)**

**The Mission of the Eau Claire Democratic Party is to promote democratic and progressive principles  
and to elect Democratic and progressive candidates—from town halls to the White House**

## An Oppressive New Law—The Voter ID Bill by Kristen Dexter and Jeff Smith

The idea of limiting the number of people who vote is closely associated with ALEC's founder, Paul Weyrich. Many of Weyrich's statements over the years were tailored to advance the agenda of white fundamentalists, and in 1980 he gave a particularly illuminating and disturbing speech on voting. He expressly told a group of religious conservatives: "I don't want everybody to vote. Elections are not won by a majority of people, they never have been from the beginning of our country and they are not now. As a matter of fact, our leverage in the elections quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down." (From PRWatch.org, Submitted by Lisa Graves on July 27, 2011).

So explains the surge of voter suppression acts in legislatures across the United States. Under the watch of Richard Nixon, Weyrich founded ALEC in 1973. Its primary funding comes from Exxon Mobil, the Coors Family, Koch Foundation and the Olin Foundation along with 300 other corporate partners. The board is made up of representatives from Johnson & Johnson, AT&T, Koch Industries, Kraft, PhRMA, Wal Mart and State Farm Insurance. Their purpose is clear: take control of government and this nation to freely pursue their private profits while ignoring the needs of the greater population.

How to do this? Start with denigrating government in the minds and eyes of the citizens, sway the voters to be sympathetic to the rhetoric of 'too much government', help elect legislators that they can control and then make sure to control who votes and when. We're fighting battles on many fronts against the corporate machine and corporate profiteers, but none is more frightening and important than voter suppression.

**Wisconsin's new law is the most restrictive of all voter-suppression laws in the United States.** Here's how the ALEC-influenced Voter Photo ID Act works in Wisconsin:

1. Wisconsin now requires voters to show an *acceptable* photo ID to vote starting with the February (soon to be April) primary of 2012. An acceptable ID includes a DOT issued driver license, a Wisconsin DOT issued ID card, a military ID card or a U.S. passport. A certificate of naturalization works if issued not earlier than two years before the date of the election. An ID issued by an accredited Wisconsin university or college is acceptable if it contains all three of the following: date of issuance, signature of the student, and expiration date not later than two years after date of issuance.

2. In-person absentee voters need to also show a photo ID. Absentee voters by mail must also send in a copy of their **photo** ID or they will not be sent a ballot.

3. Previously you could vote from your address if you resided there at least ten days prior to the election. It is now 28 days.

4. Previously you could request an absentee ballot right up to 5:00pm on the Monday before the Tuesday election. That has been moved to 5:00pm on the Friday before the Tuesday election.

5. Voters registering for the first time must provide their previous address (or as much of it as they can remember).

6. Only municipal clerks may appoint a Special Registration Deputy (SDR), and that person can only register voters in the municipality in which they live and vote. Previously the state Government Accountability Board (GAB) could appoint SDRs who could register voters for the whole state.

7. A voter can no longer use a witness to corroborate their address.

Though there are plenty of problems confronting voters with this new law, it's important to note that **the bill language allows that an acceptable photo ID is NOT required to have a current address.** Just as important is getting that information into the hands of voters so they're not turned away on voting day.

Regardless, the difficulty for students, seniors, certain ethnic groups and the poor are substantial. College campuses are working to make sure their students retain their right to vote, but there are still some major accessibility and privacy issues to be worked out.

For instance, the student IDs issued on our campuses do not currently meet the standards to make them acceptable under this law. The new law insists that IDs cannot be more than two years old and they must be accompanied by a payment receipt issued from the university that is dated no earlier than nine months before the election. **And if a student holds an out-of-state driver license they must relinquish that license and acquire a Wisconsin license to be allowed to vote (really!).**

Tens of thousands of state university students and a staggering number of other people, especially older Americans and people of color, lack a designated state-issued photo ID. Those include 23% of all Wisconsinites over the age of 65; 17% of white men and women; 55% of all African American males and 49% of African American women; 46% of Hispanic men and 59% of Hispanic women; 78% of African American men age 18-24; and 66% of African American women age 18-24.

Although Wisconsin's voter ID law offers free IDs Governor Scott Walker subsequently announced plans to close as many as ten offices where people could obtain IDs, allegedly located in Democratic districts. Walker later rescinded his plans to close DMV stations under pressure from the press and public interest groups.

Some aspects of this bill are head-scratchers. If you are hospitalized it is allowable for you to appoint an agent to request and receive an absentee ballot. That agent, though, must present your photo ID to receive that ID. If you request a ballot by mail you must send along a copy of your PHOTO ID. Under both of those circumstances it seems logical to ask: who will they compare the photo to?!? And though it may seem fairly innocuous that the absentee ballot deadline was moved from the Monday before the election to the Friday before, keep this in mind. If anyone is suddenly called away on Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Monday for a family emergency or business emergency and hadn't thought to request an absentee ballot (because emergencies aren't planned), that person has just been disenfranchised.

Just as disconcerting is the area in which they stripped the GAB of the ability to deputize persons to register voters. At first glance it may seem sensible that Special Registration Deputies may only register voters for the municipality in which they were deputized, but this may work hand in hand with the outrageous redistricting plan they recently passed. A town clerk working out of his/her home will be inconvenienced to deputize a SRD—or they may choose only to deputize persons that will register their friendly voters. Rural districts will see less voter participation, bringing true Weyrich's 1980 statement: "Our leverage in the elections quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down."

We will no doubt need to dig even deeper to understand the true implications of this oppressive new law. Anytime we disenfranchise ANY voter for ANY reason it is a disservice to the voter and to democracy in general.

For FAQs and constantly updated information please refer to the Government Accountability Board's website at: <http://gab.wi.gov/node/1593>

Check out this article, "Congress Investigates GOP War on Voting," in *Rolling Stone* magazine: <http://readersupportednews.org/off-site-news-section/53-53/7406-congress-investigates-gop-war-on-voting>