

Dear

Recently my office was contacted regarding a request for additional ballots for the City of Milwaukee. Upon receiving this request, we checked with the staff of the Milwaukee County Election Commission. The information provided to my office raises some serious questions.

In light of these concerns – and because of some concerns raised on other matters during the past few weeks – I am inviting all of the election officials in Milwaukee County to a meeting on Thursday, October 14 from 10:00 to 11:30 A.M. in our conference room at the courthouse (room 306).

As I understand it, a series of requests were made by the City of Milwaukee Election Commission that the Milwaukee County Election Commission a total of 938,300 for the City of Milwaukee. After discussions with the City of Milwaukee, county staff in the commission office proposed to print 574,105. Eventually, they agreed to print 679,500.

This number is more than 150% of the total number of registered voters in the City of Milwaukee. As of the September 2004 election, the City of Milwaukee reports that they have 382,737 registered voters.

Two years ago, the City of Milwaukee reported having 335,889 voters pre-registered for the 2002 general election while 141,351 votes were actually cast on election day. There was a higher number of actual votes cast in the general election in the 2000 general election at 245,670, but that number is still considerably lower than 938,300 (also, it is considerably lower than 679,500).

For the September primary election, the City of Milwaukee requested 841,357 ballots. In the end, 94,643 votes were cast in that election in the city.

In addition, the total population of the City of Milwaukee in 2000 was 596,974. As of January 2004, the estimated population for the City of Milwaukee was 593,920 – lower than in 2000. Of that number, 423,811 are estimated to be of legal voting age.

We are also concerned as to the reasons for large increases in the number of ballots requested for specific wards – as opposed to an across the board increase throughout the city. These requests do not appear to be driven solely by higher census counts, but by anticipated voter registration drives in certain areas.

In light of the legal concerns raised by some voter registration organizations, we need to review this information – not only in relation to your request for a large number of new ballots, but also to insure that the registration drives are in compliance with the law.

Since the request for ballots from the City of Milwaukee is nearly as large as the total population of Milwaukee County, it seems right that it raises some concerns. It is an even larger concern when we look at the trends for pre-registration – for votes cast and for population in 2000 and 2002.

As mentioned, I ask that you join me for a meeting with other election officials in the county – as well as representatives from the State Elections Board and the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office. Our agenda will include a discussion about:

- Ballot requests and costs
- Staffing of polling places
- Review of voter registration drives
- Status of poll lists
- Disposal of unused ballots

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to seeing you on Thursday.

Sincerely,

Scott Walker
Milwaukee County Executive

Cc: Milwaukee County Election Commission – members and staff; Mayor Tom Barrett