

# Voting Rights, Housing & Access to Justice

## VOTING

**DRW supports efforts to increase rates of voting for people with disabilities.**

***Why:** People with disabilities vote at a rate 5 to 15 percent below people without disabilities. DRW supports investments that improve voter education and eliminate unique barriers for voters with disabilities, such as transportation and accessible information.*

- Proposal: DRW supports the request by the State of Wisconsin Elections Commission for funding to continue the polling place accessibility audit program, which ensures that polling places are accessible to individuals with disabilities, and to undertake outreach efforts with organizations which work with and represent those voters. (\$48,300 in FY 2019).
- Proposal: DRW opposes the Department of Transportation's budget request to issue "Voting Purposes Only" IDs on card stock as a cost-saving measure. People with disabilities who do not drive require these IDs at the polls. Free IDs issued by the state should be of the same quality as all IDs required and available to all Wisconsin residents, regardless of disability. (Maintain current funding levels).

## HOUSING

**DRW works to ensure people with disabilities are able live in and participate in their communities and that communities and housing are accessible.**

***Why:** DRW is concerned about an increase in the number of instances when people with disabilities have faced neighborhood resistance when they have moved into community-based settings. DRW continues to push back against NIMBY (not in my backyard) actions and discriminatory policies and ordinances that have been used in local communities. DRW will oppose all attempts to limit an individual's right and access to housing. DRW supports policies that increase accessible, affordable, transit-accessible housing and that promote the community integration of people with disabilities.*

- Proposal: Fund two Housing First pilots; one in Southeast Wisconsin and one in a less populated area of the state to encourage capacity-building of affordable, accessible housing for low-income individuals, many of whom are people with mental illness. (\$400,000 per year; projected total cost savings, including recoupment of investment, after two years of \$50,000).

## ACCESS TO JUSTICE

**DRW supports equitable access to legal representation for all people with disabilities statewide.**

***Why:** People with disabilities face increased barriers to access to justice. People with disabilities are 30% more likely to lack the financial means to obtain legal representation in a civil legal matter than the general population. Our system of justice is premised upon an adversarial justice system that favors and for most practical purposes requires representation by legal counsel. Access to Justice Studies in Wisconsin have documented a significant gap between identified legal issues and the ability to retain counsel.*

- Proposal: Allocate funding to the Wisconsin Trust Account Fund to provide legal services to individuals who are Medicaid eligible in civil legal matters. (\$2,000,000 over the biennium).