



---

Office of the Mayor

James J. Schmitt  
Mayor

## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 25, 2016**

**Contact:** Celestine Jeffreys, Chief of Staff  
920-448-3006

### **Satellite Early In Person Absentee Polling Location Questions**

(GREEN BAY, WI) The media allegations that the City Clerk is attempting to curtail Democratic voting for this election are completely false. When the Clerk was approached by a state Democratic representative, she sought guidance from the City Attorney's Office, and was informed that election law requires neutrality in identifying satellite polling locations. She also sought counsel directly from the Wisconsin Ethics Commission and Wisconsin Elections Commission, the very agencies charged with ensuring she follows Wisconsin election law.

Accordingly, the media's attack on the City Clerk unfairly slants her words and her intent. Under state law, "...no site may be designated that affords an advantage to any political party." Wis. Stat. § 6.855(1). The Clerk was seeking guidance in interpreting that statute. Furthermore, when the City could not offer a polling location at UWGB, it agreed to offer free bus passes to students, until the election is over, to ensure they have continued access to early voting. The City has never ignored students, but every action we take has to be within the confines of the law.

Furthermore, the City has continued to work on identifying alternate polling locations for 2017 and beyond. In the past, Green Bay has had only one early in-person absentee polling location (the Clerk's office), and so we look forward to expanding these opportunities to other parts of the city. In order to ensure that we bring these opportunities to best serve the broad electorate, we have undertaken several steps. We have analyzed our public transportation routes and our current election day polling locations. We reviewed redistricting data from 2010 to identify the demographics of the populace. To help us identify potential locations, we've generated maps of the city's existing polling locations as well as municipal-owned facilities which may be used. We have begun to look at how other communities handle their early voting locations, how sites are selected, the average population served by each location, and the hours of operation. In addition, we have asked the Clerk to take note of the days and times when the Clerk's Office sees the greatest influx of voters. The City has heard the community's request for additional early voting options, and we are working hard to ensure all voters are afforded equal access to early voting.

As a final note, the people involved in these decisions were self-identified Democrats, Republicans and Independents.