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The truth is incontrovertible on municipal IDs

“No matter how big the lie, repeat it often enough and the masses will regard it as truth.”

That quote from John F. Kennedy comes to mind whenever I hear the explanations as to why elected officials from the city and county of Milwaukee are pushing to offer municipal identification cards to some of their constituents.

Certain Milwaukee-area lawmakers and advocacy groups claim the ID program will give everyone the chance to achieve the American dream by allowing all community members to apply for jobs, open bank accounts, obtain medical prescriptions and request library cards.

But, for the benefit of all state citizens, it’s time to provide **actual facts** so the public isn’t duped into accepting these deceptions as truth.

According to information supplied by the Wisconsin Legislative Council, a municipal ID would satisfy only part of the [documentation requirements](#) for gaining employment. In addition to a municipal ID, applicants would also have to show other forms of identification, such as an unrestricted social security card or a birth certificate.

That would prevent undocumented immigrants – the largest population for whom supporters say the IDs are intended to help – from being able to get a job.

Municipal IDs also can only be used to open a bank account if that particular financial institution accepts such identification cards as proof of identity. [Federal law requires](#) that each bank collects specific personal information for creating an account, including the person’s name, date of birth, address and either a social security number or an employer identification number.

In other words, there is no [guarantee banks will allow](#) an individual who only has a municipal ID to open an account. Libraries don’t have to accept municipal IDs either.

Under Wisconsin law, a person also doesn’t have to present a photo ID when picking up most prescription medications. The primary exception to this rule was created by [2013 Wisconsin Act 199](#), which calls for Schedule II and III drugs to only be dispensed to those with a valid ID. A municipal ID is not included in the list of acceptable identification cards for the purchase of these types of prescriptions.

The authors and supporters of the proposed program also have repeatedly said they do not intend for their municipal IDs to be used for voting purposes. Yet every time they’ve been asked to include that language on the cards, they’ve rebuffed, saying they don’t want the card holders to “[feel bad](#).”

While municipal ID cards are not currently accepted as a valid form of identification under the state’s voter ID law, the proposal from the city and county of Milwaukee could cause mass confusion at the polls and disenfranchise some

voters. Distributing municipal IDs that people may believe qualifies them for voting and public benefits is potentially misleading and unfair to the cards' recipients. It could also put our poll workers in a precarious situation of having to explain to unsuspecting holders of municipal-issued IDs why they cannot be used on Election Day.

That is partly why Sen. Van Wanggaard and I have introduced legislation that regulates the production and use of photo identification cards by local units of government.

Under our bill, cities and villages are still able issue municipal IDs. All our legislation does is lay out ground rules for issuance and use. The cards have to clearly state they cannot be used for voting. They also cannot be used to obtain public benefits.

Unless there is something secretly nefarious about what Milwaukee-area officials are trying to accomplish with their IDs, they will have no objection to the bill as it only serves to codify their publicly stated intent in state law.

Since we began circulating the legislation in December, opponents and various media outlets have falsely labeled our proposal as an "attack on local control." But the bill only prohibits the issuance of municipal IDs by counties and towns, which are extensions of state government. So, local control does not apply there. Since cities and villages are allowed to issue IDs under the bill, there is no issue there either.

It's also important to mention Milwaukee County is planning to use \$150,000 in state aid to help pay for their identification cards. If our bill is passed, that money would go toward its original objective or other necessary programs, such as transit or mental health services.

Besides, as part of the voter ID law, the Department of Transportation already provides [free state IDs](#) to any legal Wisconsin resident. In addition to voting, those state IDs can actually be used for the same intended purposes of the municipal IDs. As a result, creating and paying for another government photo identification card would be repetitive, and thus, a waste of taxpayer money.

Supporters of the municipal IDs, however, don't seem to be interested in those facts. They would rather divert your attention away from the intent of our bill – preventing confusion and protecting taxpayers and the integrity of elections – by calling us [xenophobes and violators of local control](#). But you, the citizens of Wisconsin, deserve to know what's really going on and not be distracted by name-calling and false accusations.

As Winston Churchill once said, "The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it and ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Sanfelippo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

State Rep. Joe Sanfelippo