



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Rep. Brostoff Statement on National Uprising in Belarus**

MILWAUKEE – In response to the ongoing protests against government repression and electoral corruption in Belarus in the wake of that country’s August 9th presidential election, Rep. Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement:

“I am in solidarity with the people of Belarus as they rise up and protest against decades of dictatorial and anti-democratic rule under Alexander Lukashenko. The election results from August 9th were fraudulent and an affront to the most basic freedoms, and the people of Belarus deserve a chance at fair elections, free from meddling. What we are seeing in Belarus is exactly what happens when one individual in power decides that the rules shouldn’t apply to him, and relies on underhanded, fraudulent tactics and the backing of other strongmen to remain in power. This election was a sham, and the Belarusian government’s response to the protests that have followed has been absolutely shameful.”

First elected in 1994, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko declared victory in his sixth bid for President on August 9th of this year, claiming to have received over 80% of the vote in an election that has widely been condemned as neither fair nor free. In response, his closest competitor in the election, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, fled to Lithuania and denounced the election results as clearly rigged, and the Belarusian people flooded the streets in protest. In response, the Belarusian government began to crack down on protesters with violent responses from police and security forces and widespread arrests, though these measures have not slowed down the ongoing protests, which have continued to grow in size and scope.

“That said, I hope that my fellow Americans are watching these protests very carefully, and that our own strongman-wannabe is paying attention as well: cracking down on peaceful protesters, arresting individuals without cause, deploying federal agents and security forces in the streets, these are all straight out of a dictator’s playbook, and they are unacceptable actions. Disconcertingly, we continue to see similar tactics already put to use in our own streets under the Trump Administration. But what I’ve seen, both at home and in watching the people of Belarus, gives me hope. Thousands of regular citizens, standing together against government repression, against a broken status quo, and marching for a new and better world. That world is within our sights, and We the People can get there together as long as we fight for what’s right and make it clear that any attacks on our democracy are attacks on each and every one of us. Dictators are not welcome at home *or* abroad, and we will continue to make our voices heard in the streets as long as they continue their assaults on the citizens who deserve freedom. Працягвайце маршы. Keep marching.”

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