

## GUEST COLUMN

# Mitch Henck: Progressives waste \$55K because Trump won

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So why did The Dane County Board vote to spend \$55,000 to study Wisconsin election law in Dane and Milwaukee counties? After all, the study wasn't authorized by the state Department of Justice or state lawmakers or state election officials.

The study, by UW-Madison political science professor Ken Mayer, was pushed by progressive Dane County Clerk Scott McDonell and approved by our progressive County Board. About 2,400 surveys were sent out and 293 people responded.

From that, the professor figured that nearly 17,000 people in Milwaukee and Dane counties didn't vote because of the state Voter ID law. Roughly two-thirds of the respondents said they didn't vote because of the Voter ID law, even though they had legal IDs.

"That's the point," Dane County Board Chair Sharon Corrigan said. "People are confused." She added the old chestnut, "This is a solution in search of a problem."

I asked her why Dane County taxpayers were paying for a study of a state law and how it was affecting Milwaukee County.

"I wish the state would do a broader study," Corrigan responded, "but we did what we could because compliance with this law is costing the state way too much."

That's interesting. We are talking about taxes and fees of people living in Dane County. Board members didn't spend the \$55,000 on road repair or shelters for domestic abuse victims. They spent it on a study that gathered 293 responses and calculated from that that nearly 17,000 people didn't vote in two counties because of a state law Dane County Board members and the clerk really hate.

Wisconsin Treasurer Matt Adamczyk, who ran on getting rid of his office, went so far as to say Dane County should lose \$55,000 in state revenue sharing because it wasted local taxpayers' money on the election study. That sounds a bit harsh, since innocent Dane County taxpayers already shelled out for the first \$55,000 through the Dane County Clerk's Office.

The conservative Maclver Institute blasts the study for basing its results on too small of a sample. Maclver points out that only nine people of the 293 respondents were kept from voting by the ID law. But survey architect and UW professor Mayer says the respondent number is fine for an estimated 150,000 registered eligible non-voters in the two counties.

"Voters are confused," Mayer said. "Some think their driver's license must show a current address when that isn't true."

Federal Judge Jim Peterson already watered down the Wisconsin law substantially when he ruled that voters without required ID get a lot more time to get their credentials after casting a provisional ballot.

But that's not good enough for the Dane County Board. The problem is that hard-core progressives on the County Board can't change state law no matter how many cappuccinos they consume before their meetings. That job is still up to those darn state legislators, whether they are gerrymandered or not.

It's safe to say that supervisors would not have spent our money on the study had Democrat Hillary Clinton won the White House. One doesn't need \$55,000 to see that while Republican President Donald Trump received 1,500 more votes than Mitt Romney in 2012, Clinton received 238,000 fewer votes than President Obama in 2012. The Republicans were virtually the same. Clinton simply didn't match the Obama excitement.

I once had to ask a neighbor to vouch for me so I could vote at a new address. I lacked the proper proof of residence at the time. The new law would not let me do that.

I sympathize with legitimate voter grievances. But I roll my eyes at the Dane County Board when it spends our money like candy because progressive supervisors didn't get the results they wanted and threw a tantrum.

*Mitch Henck is a Madison, Wisconsin based commentator, broadcaster and standup comic. The Mitch Henck Show streams at [www.madisontalks.com](http://www.madisontalks.com) and you can find Mitch's podcasts there. Watch Mitch's Daily Video Blog, "Two Minutes with Mitch," weekdays at [madison.com](http://madison.com).*

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