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Public Interest Legal Foundation Drops Meritless Voter Purge Lawsuit Against Detroit

DETROIT—The Public Interest Legal Foundation (PILF), a group that has repeatedly sued election officials for not purging voters aggressively enough, today asked a judge to dismiss its own lawsuit against the City of Detroit.

PILF had sought to compel the city to undertake unwarranted voter purges based on questionable and unsubstantiated data. But after the League of Women Voters of Michigan and the League of Women Voters of Detroit intervened and pressed PILF to produce evidence to support its claims, PILF dropped its lawsuit.

“This is a victory for the voters of Michigan,” said **Christina Schlitt**, president of the League of Women Voters of Michigan, which joined the case on the city’s side in May. “The League of Women Voters has worked hard to register and educate eligible voters in the state, and PILF was trying to undo that work. The League stepped in to push back against PILF’s bullying tactics, and we won.”

The Indiana-based PILF has brought multiple purge suits against cities and counties across the country. Indeed, the court recognized that “the same plaintiff has initiated or is in the process of initiating multiple lawsuits in various courts around the state raising essentially identical claims attempting to coerce municipalities to purge their voter rolls.”

But when it came time to offer proof, PILF withdrew.

“From the start, we’ve said this lawsuit is without merit,” said **Eliza Sweren-Becker**, counsel in the Brennan Center’s Voting Rights and Elections Program. “When pressed for evidence to support their allegations, PILF withdrew its case rather than try to prove it. It’s shameful that PILF made the City of Detroit spend time and money to defend against a case that should never have been brought in the first place.”

“If PILF had succeeded in this suit, voters could have been disenfranchised,” said Rhonda Craig, president of the League of Women Voters of Detroit, which also joined the suit in May. “We weren’t going to let that happen.”

Federal law protects voters against unreasonable purge practices. Yet, PILF was using the legal system to try and demand that election administrators conduct voter purges based on unsubstantiated and unsolicited data presented by third parties. The League argued the purge practices sought by PILF threatened the voting rights of Detroit citizens and the integrity of election administration statewide.

The League was represented in this case by the Brennan Center for Justice, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP, and Butzel Long.

Read the case background [here](#).

Read our statement online [HERE](#).