



CONTACT: Leah Rush, Director
312-235-2855 or lrush@midwestdemocracynetwork.org

Statement In Support of People's Rights and Our Democratic Process

As member organizations of the six-state Midwest Democracy Network, we stand united in support of demonstrators in Madison, Wisconsin, and in other state capitals and communities across our country who are protesting politically motivated assaults on our democratic process.

The Midwest Democracy Network is an alliance of nonprofit, nonpartisan civic engagement organizations dedicated to improving the condition of democracy in the Midwest region.

All of our states are experiencing tough times economically and all of our states now face serious budget problems. We will all be required to make difficult choices and pain is unavoidable. But it is never acceptable to take away people's rights for the sake of balancing a budget or to push through legislation without public input.

The common fiscal crisis faced by our states presents us with some stark choices. We can engage the electorate in the deliberative process — sometimes slow, sometimes messy — at the heart of our democratic system. Or we can trample rights and allow government rule by fiat.

As our country watched in awe as citizens of Egypt stood shoulder to shoulder to demand their voices be heard, we must look at ourselves in the mirror and question whether we practice the kind of democracy we preach.

Hundreds of thousands of citizens have cried out for justice, not only in Madison but in countless places across our region and indeed throughout the nation. This is an historic uprising. It is about worker rights, yes, but more fundamentally it is about democratic rights.

Signed by (as of 3/7/2011):

Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice
Citizen Advocacy Center
Common Cause MI
Democracy Matters at Indiana University
Illinois Campaign for Political Reform
Ohio Citizen Action
TakeAction Minnesota
Wisconsin Democracy Campaign
Wisconsin Voices