



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

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TO: The Honorable Senator Nichi Farnham
The Honorable Representative Michael Beaulieu, Co-chairs
The Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

RE: LD 199 An Act To Strengthen Maine's Election Laws by Requiring Photograph
Identification for the Purpose of Voting

The League of Women Voters of Maine submits the following testimony in opposition to LD 199. For more than 90 years, Leagues here in Maine and across the country have worked to educate and register voters and make government at all levels more accessible and responsive to citizens. The League supports full voting participation by all eligible American citizens, and we oppose efforts to create new barriers that block citizens' constitutional right to vote.

Here's why we oppose LD 199:

It will be expensive: Implementation of voter photo ID laws in other states has cost millions of dollars. In addition to the cost of offering free documents such as driver's license and birth certificate, other states have had to launch massive and continuing voter education campaigns. This is in addition to the added costs of administering the requirements at the polls. Some of the costs that may need to be addressed include:

- Poll worker training
- Public education campaigns
- Possible lost revenue
- Defending against possible lawsuits
- Additional absentee ballots and processing
- Possible free photo ID and birth certificates
- Costs to local governments that may need to extend hours of operation

A recent bi-partisan commission of County Auditors from Iowa went on a fact finding mission to Indiana to learn the cost of implementing photo ID legislation. Indiana was the first state to implement such legislation in 2007. The Iowa State Association of County Auditors (ISACA) report found that the cost of implementing the photo ID law in Indiana exceeds \$10 million over four years, and that is simply the cost of providing free photo identification. These figures do not include the continuing cost to educate voters (an additional \$600,000 for 2010 alone) or re-train poll workers and elections officials. (See charts attached.)

It's unnecessary: Voter ID laws counter one exceedingly rare kind of voter fraud -- impersonating someone else at the polls. This doesn't happen in Maine. We know of only one case of voter fraud that has been prosecuted in more than 30 years. There is no evidence that this is occurring in significant numbers. Indeed, since such activities are illegal, we would expect to see many reports of prosecutions and convictions if significant numbers of ineligible individuals were voting or attempting to vote under a false identity. While there is no question that election misconduct exists in some states, this has not been the case in Maine. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the types of fraud perpetrated elsewhere (e.g., improper purges of eligible voters, distributing false information about when and where to vote, absentee ballot fraud, tampering with registration forms) can be solved by strict photo ID laws.

It could disenfranchise voters: If our law requires the kind of government-issued ID that similar laws in other states have required, then we could find 11% of our voters do not have the required ID. Percentages are higher among the elderly, ethnic minorities, students, and low income voters, and these are the same groups who have traditionally faced barriers at the polls.¹ The cost of obtaining a driver's license or state-issued ID in Maine may seem modest, but the expense and complexity of the process present real barriers to voting when one considers the time off from work and the travel to obtain them, especially for the elderly or disabled. A recent survey conducted by the Brennan Center for Justice found that, while 11% of those surveyed did not have a government-issued photo ID, that figure rose to 18% for elderly citizens, 25% for African-American citizens, and 15% for citizens with comparatively low income. Furthermore, for 18% of citizens aged 18-24, their valid photo ID did not contain their current information (name and address).

Voting is the most fundamental expression of citizenship in our democracy. The expansion of the franchise to include all Americans regardless of race, ethnicity or gender, and the breaking down of barriers to citizen voter participation -- from literacy tests to the poll taxes -- has been one of the great successes in the evolution of American democracy. We believe that LD 199 would turn back the clock and erect unnecessary barriers to voter participation.

We respectfully urge that this Committee vote "ought not to pass" on LD 199.

Ann Luther
League of Women Voters of Maine
February 16, 2011

¹ *Citizens without Proof: A Survey of Americans' Possession of Documentary Proof of Citizenship and Photo Identification*, November 2006, Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, a non-partisan public policy and law institute, http://www.brennancenter.org/dynamic/subpages/download_file_39242.pdf

Examples of Cost Fiscal Impacts of Implementing Voter Photo ID

Indiana – Free photo IDs

For certain persons, Indiana provides free photo IDs from the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) for voting purposes. Each free ID is clearly labeled, “For Voting Purposes,” and provision of the free IDs has also been cited in court challenges as a method to prevent an undue burden on persons otherwise unable to pay for the ID, and to counter allegations of a poll tax. The Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles has calculated its cost at \$13 for each ID and has provided the following documentation of the costs incurred by the Bureau for providing the free IDs for voting purposes:

Year	# ID's	Cost
2007	175,300	\$ 2,278,900
2008	219,203	\$ 2,849,639
2009	208,250	\$ 2,707,250
2010	168,264	\$ 2,187,432
To date	771,017	\$ 10,023,221

Comparing Iowa’s 2.1 million registered voters to Indiana’s 4.3 million, and using the current Iowa charge of \$5.00 for a non-operator ID, an estimate of the annual cost of free photo IDs in Iowa would be:

84,132 number of free non-operator IDs
\$5.00 current charge for non-operator ID in Iowa
\$420,660 cost per year

If Iowa would offer free birth certificates in addition to free photo IDs, an estimate would be:

84,132 number of free birth certificates
\$15.00 current charge for certified birth certificate in Iowa
\$1,261,980 cost per year

Indiana includes administrative costs in the \$13 per ID amount; this paper does not attempt to estimate such administrative costs for Iowa, and actual amounts currently charged are used in the above estimates.



HOW MUCH WOULD A VOTER ID LAW COST NORTH CAROLINA?

Every place is different, but the experiences of other states offer clues to the likely cost of a voter ID bill for North Carolina taxpayers. The following projections come from fiscal notes, or cost estimates, prepared by state officials. A Facing South/Institute for Southern Studies analysis of fiscal notes for voter ID laws nationally found that most neglected to report key expenses or stated these costs could be "absorbed" by existing agencies -- an unlikely scenario today, with deep budget cuts at all level of government.

STATE EXPENSE	WHY IT'S NEEDED	3-YEAR ESTIMATES OTHER STATES	3-YEAR ESTIMATE NORTH CAROLINA
EDUCATING VOTERS	TV ads, mailings, other outreach to inform current and new voters; to avoid confusion and people being turned away at the polls	High End - Missouri: \$16.9 million (\$1.37/voter/year) Low End - Texas: \$6 million (15 cents/voter/year)	\$13 - 15.8 million (80 cents/voter/year)
ID CARDS	ID materials/equipment; increased demand at DMV ID stations; cost of issuing ID cards to avoid law becoming "poll tax" on those without ID	High End - Missouri: \$3.4 million (28 cents/voter/year) Mid-Level - Wisconsin: \$2.3 million (22 cents/voter/year) Low End - South Carolina: \$675,000* (3 cents/voter/year)	\$2.5 - \$4.7 million (20 cents/voter/year)
ADMINISTRATIVE/ IMPLEMENTATION COSTS	Hiring/training more precinct judges and poll staff to handle IDs and provisional ballots; printing provisional ballots; updating forms/procedures and training staff; other expenses	POLL STAFF: Montgomery County, Maryland: \$285,000 (16 cents/voter/year); Minnesota: \$1.4 million (15 cents/voter/year) plus EXTRA BALLOTS: South Carolina: \$480,000 (2 cents/voter/year) plus SYSTEMS/TRAINING: Wisconsin: \$138,000 (4 cents/voter) plus other expenses	\$3.5 - \$5.5 million (25 cents/voter/year)
TOTAL COST			\$18.5 - \$25.2 million for three years

* Estimate for cameras and ID equipment ONLY; South Carolina's estimates did not include other costs associated with IDs

Source: Fiscal notes for Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin legislatures
 Chart: Institute for Southern Studies, February 2011 (www.southernstudies.org)

FISCAL ESTIMATE FOR MISSOURI HJR 48

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Quarter page ads through the MO Press Association run twice before each federal election.	\$1,200.00
Production of radio and TV public service announcements	\$1,240.00
The advance notice provided by the SOS must include at a minimum the “use of advertisements and public service announcements in print, broadcast television, radio, and cable television media	\$1,500,000.00
The bill requires that the Secretary of State print provisional ballots.	\$22,000.00
Costs for 116 Local Election Authorities	\$3,600,000.00
The cost of the additional poll workers and the training required to successfully implement the act for a single election is as follows:	\$1,282,050.00
The Secretary of State's office will have to register voter registration solicitors - Staff needs	\$15,000.00
Investigating complaints	\$8,500.00
COST TO MISSOURI TAXPAYERS	\$6,429,990.00

From Fiscal Note: 4947S-25S