



Legislation Summary:

An Act requiring photo IDs to vote

Initial bill number(s): H. 658

Sponsors: Rep. Donald Berthiaume

An Act ensuring the election integrity through voter identification

Initial bill number(s): H. 687

Sponsors: Rep. Colleen Garry

An Act establishing identification at the voting polls

Initial bill number(s): H. 720

Sponsors: Rep. Alyson Sullivan-Almeida

What these bills do, why LWVMA opposes them, and the League position relative to these bills.

These bills require some form of photo, government or employer identification at the polls, and would make it more difficult to vote. Expansion of voter identification requirements can suppress voter turnout, be burdensome to voters and election officials, and create barriers – especially for voters who are elderly or disabled, members of a racial or ethnic minority, new citizens, and young voters. Under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), states must, among other things, require all voters to provide their driver's license number or the last four digits of their Social Security number when registering to vote. HAVA also requires first-time voters who registered by mail to produce identification before voting. The League believes these requirements are adequate to prevent voter impersonation.

LWVMA opposes these bills because:

- Voter disenfranchisement and low voter turnout are much greater problems than in-person voter impersonation, the only form of fraud showing a photo ID would address.
- Requiring identification at the polling place would result in many eligible voters being turned away. Many poor and minority voters do not carry photo identification, and would be turned away in error. These voters, especially new citizens who may be concerned about government intrusion, are also more likely to be intimidated by such requirements.
- Implementing photo ID to vote is an unnecessary expense.
- Many Americans live with roommates, spouses, or relatives, or live on a college campus, where their name is not on the lease or on utility bills so they do not have these items as forms of identification at the polls.

League position: “The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that voting is a fundamental citizen’s right that must be guaranteed. (LWVUS) (1982) The 1986 LWVUS Convention

affirmed an essential element for protecting the right to vote was encouraging participation in the political process. The 1990 convention affirmed that the LWVUS should continue emphasis on protecting the right to vote by working to increase voter participation. LWVMA reaffirmed that.” LWVMA has supported legislation to remove administrative obstacles to voting and/or registration. [Where We Stand](#)
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