



**Testimony in opposition to**  
**H.658 An Act requiring photo IDs to vote,**  
**H.687 An Act ensuring the election integrity through voter identification, and**  
**H.720 An Act establishing identification at the voting polls**  
**Submitted to the Joint Committee on Election Laws**  
**By Nancy Brumback, LWVMA Elections and Voting Legislative Specialist**  
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As we have in past sessions of the Legislature, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts strongly opposes passage of bills that would place unnecessary requirements on voters at the polls. Voter suppression and intimidation tactics are gaining ground across our country, fed by a false narrative of widespread voter fraud. Massachusetts must not be part of any efforts to hinder the ability of qualified citizens to vote.

The right to vote is the foundation of our democracy, and voting should be as easy and accessible as possible. Expansion of voter identification requirements beyond what is mandated by the Help America Vote Act 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.

These bills would expand voter identification requirements and make it more difficult to vote.

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. Massachusetts does not need to add costly and time-consuming voter ID regulations that would disenfranchise voters as proposed in these bills.

H.658 would require "a current valid photo form of identification," specifying "a current driver's license, a government employee card, a pilot's license, military identification, a Medicaid or Medicare card, and for students, a photo identification university card." We note that employee identification cards from non-government employers are not included, and also would point out that Medicaid and Medicare cards do not have a photo.

H.687 specifies a voter shall present: "his Commonwealth of Massachusetts voter registration card, his social security card, his valid Massachusetts driver's license, or any other identification card issued by a government agency by the Commonwealth, one of its political subdivisions, or the United States; or any valid employee identification card containing a photograph of the voter and issued by an employer of the voter in the ordinary course of the employer's business." Student IDs do not count. The bill then states that "Any person desiring to vote who fails to present suitable identification shall not be permitted to vote."

H.720 would require the Secretary of State to issue a photo ID card for voting purposes only on request and at no cost, ignoring the cost of the time and effort to go to some specified office to be photographed.

Acquiring such a card puts a disproportionate burden on people with disabilities that limit their ability to travel and on women who are more likely to change their name when their marital status changes. This bill specifies that the voting ID card is a valid ID, along with a MassHealth or Medicare card (which does not have a photo), current driver's license, government employee identification card, pilot's license, military identification, state identification card or United States passport, but not a non-government employer ID or student ID.

LWVMA and the 44 local Leagues we represent oppose these bills because:

- Voter disenfranchisement and low voter turnout are much greater problems than in-person voter impersonation, the only form of fraud showing ID would address. In comprehensive studies of voter fraud, researchers concluded that in-person election fraud has been extremely rare. Most reported instances of in-person voter impersonation fraud were found to be baseless.
- Requiring identification at the polling place would result in many eligible voters being turned away. Many voters, in particular poor and minority voters, do not carry photo identification, and would be turned away in error. These voters, and 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.
- ID requirements can affect those who do not drive to their polling place and thus do not bring identification with them to the polls, for example, senior citizens who have given up their drivers' licenses.
- HAVA requirements for identification at the time of registration and for first-time voters who register by mail are adequate to prevent fraud.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts urges the Joint Committee on Election Laws to reject these voter ID bills. They place additional and unnecessary burdens on citizens and election officers.

Thank you for your consideration.