

**MARYLAND LEGISLATURE – HOUSE OF DELGATES  
WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

**MARYLAND HOUSE BILL 197  
ELECTION LAW – QUALIFICATION OF VOTERS – PROOF OF IDENTITY**

Members of the House Ways and Means Committee and other interested parties. I'm Richard Thomas Webb, a Maryland Citizen and live in Parkton. Most of you will probably recognize the name and the issue I speaking on behalf of since I've sent each of you a number of emails in the past couple of years. BUT,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity of presenting my thoughts relative to House Bill 197, "Election Law – Qualification of Voters – Proof of Identity". The Members of this Committee should be familiar with this Bill since it has been submitted for a number of years, but never allowed to be approved for Floor action. Not sure why, but here are my thoughts.

One of the primary responsibilities of a Maryland Citizen is to vote and elect their representative in the Maryland Legislature. In addition to that responsibility, a Maryland Citizen has the opportunity to approve or reject how their taxes are spent. In order to vote, they must be of age, a Maryland Citizen, and registered.

On Election Day, they go their Polling Place and state a name, a related address and the month and day of the birth of the named individual and proceed to vote.

Election Judges' Manual for 2020 states on page 1.13 under General Policies about Voters 1.18, in part, in bold lettering, ". . . . **do not** ask voters to show ID."

My issue is that I have accumulate dozens of examples where a valid photo ID is required to proceed with a desired action, from as simple as getting a library card, to asking for the balance on your savings account, to picking up a package at the United State Postal Service and UPS, to purchasing across the counter, non-prescription medicine, to boarding an airplane AND to obtain the federally required REAL ID Driver's License. Yet to vote in Maryland, all you need to do is state a name, a related address and the month and date of birth of that stated name.

Let me state before you might reply, I am not claiming voter fraud, just that this is such an important responsibility of a Maryland Citizen that it should command the same identity effort as the dozens of other situations requiring a valid photo ID.

The Maryland Legislature some years ago, recognized the need of a valid photo ID and enacted the ability to obtain one at the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration's locations without charge – FREE – called a Maryland Identification Card. Convenience for getting to an MVA location is no more difficulty than getting to a polling location AND is basically a one time trip.

I could continue, but I must admit I'm at a total loss as to why the House Ways & Means Committee is opposed to this commonsense requirement for voting in Maryland, a Citizen's primary responsibility!? Further, I need to ask "What is the Committee afraid of in moving this Bill to the Floor? That it might be passed?"

My related background. I am an Election Judge and have been, off and on, since 1965 in several different polling locations. The vast majority of those approaching the polling books, now computerized, want to present a form of identification, a driver's license, a Passport, or just their Voter Notification Card demonstrated Tuesday with the District 7 Special Election, and when advised that identification is not necessary, express a concern and ask why?

As I have spoken on this subject at Chamber meetings, PTA meetings, and other events, I generally ask for the attendees to raise their hand if in the past month they have had to show a valid photo ID for some transaction. The VAST majority raise their hand, and I end my thought with "BUT NOT TO VOTE IN THE STATE OF MARYLAND". Please give this issue your serious consideration and at least allow it to get to the Floor for an up or down vote.

Thank you for your attention and consideration!