

RE: HB197 Election Law - Qualification of Voters - Proof of Identity

Chairman Anne Kaiser
Members, Ways and Means Committee

As Recording Secretary of the Maryland Federation of Republican I submit this testimony on behalf of nearly 1200 women from across the State of Maryland in support of HB197 as we believe this bill preserves and protects the rights of all registered voters.

Requiring a voter to present a photo ID preserves the integrity of every voter's vote and protects the integrity of the election itself.

- > Currently, anyone who knows a registered voter's name, address, and month/day of birth can walk-in and vote as that person on a regular ballot. When an individual votes on a regular ballot, it is permanent. There is no way to remove this vote once it has been cast.

- > By requiring a voter to present photo ID, the integrity of the election is also preserved. At least 34 other states require a photo ID in order to vote a regular ballot.

Those who oppose this requirement often cite that not all voters have photo ID and that obtaining an acceptable form of ID is difficult.

- > It is actually very easy and free through the Motor Vehicles Administration.
- > Many employees already have a photo ID as even all elected officials and state and federal employees, as well as anyone who drives any type of motor vehicle do.

In addition, under this Bill, an individual who does not have photo ID can still vote but will use a provisional ballot, which is reviewed after election day.

- > If the voter is found to be eligible, then the vote is counted.
- > If not, the vote is not counted.
- > No other voter's vote is affected.
- > The rights of all voters are preserved.

Furthermore, having a photo ID insures all Marylanders access to the same opportunities that those who have a government-issued ID enjoy -

- > entrance to government buildings like this one and access to the individuals they helped to elect,
- > entering a school building,
- > opening a checking account,
- > cashing a check,
- > visiting a doctor or hospital,
- > or traveling by plane.

Passing this legislation will open many doors that are currently closed to them.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 promised two key civil rights regarding voting
1- that the citizens are not blocked from voting, and
2- that no one's vote is cancelled out by someone voting twice, votes by a non- citizen, a felon, deceased persons or those who do not even exist.

Requiring a voter ID ensures that voters' rights are protected. Disenfranchisement of voters' rights only fosters distrust of our election system and reduces voter confidence. No one is blocked by requiring an ID as they are easy and free to obtain.

Lastly, there is the issue of fraud.

Election Officials don't want to admit how vulnerable elections systems are, but they do know close elections could be flipped by fraud. Election officials have know for years that the potential for fraud exists.

As an Election Judge I can testify that voters actually WANT to show their ID
Election officials have know for years that the potential for fraud exists.

A 2016 Gallop Poll showed that 80% of those surveyed supported voter ID laws that required proof of identity in order to vote. The breakdown by party is overwhelming favorable with 95% of Republicans, 83% of Independents, and 63% of Democrats favoring voter ID.

Similar bills have been introduced in 12 of the past 15 years.
Maryland needs to join with the other 34 states that require a voter ID to vote.

Therefore, I and nearly 1200 members of the MFRW respectfully request a Favorable Report for HB197 because this bill is necessary to preserve, protect, and respect the rights of all registered voters.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne White
1913 Martins Cove Court
Annapolis, Maryland