

RESTRICTIVE VOTER PHOTO ID



Missouri voters just approved Amendment 6 to their Constitution, enabling the state legislature to pass laws requiring citizens to obtain a specific state-issued ID (driver's license or non-driver's license) in order to vote.

This measure leaves 335,000 currently-registered voters without the required identification.

Protecting the right to vote is fundamental to our promise as a nation.

This new requirement hits hardest at disadvantaged groups.

The working poor, the elderly, college students, individuals with disabilities and women (due to name changes) are likely to face financial, transportation and access barriers to obtaining this new specialized ID. Although the state has agreed to pay for the IDs, no funds have been allocated to cover the estimated \$16 million cost. The new ID requirement is confusing and tends to keep qualified voters away from the polls.

Voter Photo ID measure is costly for Missouri.

In addition to the cost of subsidizing the IDs and the required supporting documents, Missouri will likely spend millions to defend a lawsuit against this amendment. Similar measures in Texas, Wisconsin and North Carolina have been declared unconstitutional by federal courts in the past year.

In-person voter fraud is virtually non-existent.

A study of elections in all 50 states between 2000 and 2012, with 146 million voters registered, found only 10 cases of voter impersonation, the only kind of fraud that could be prevented by voter ID at the polls. According to the Attorney General's office, Missouri has not had a single confirmed case of voter impersonation. Ever.

Nonprofit agencies ramp up to assist with Voter Photo ID

Missouri currently has only one program that helps people track down the underlying documentation (certified birth certificate, documentation of marriages, divorces and name changes), obtain transportation and navigate the confusing process of obtaining the newly-required ID. That program, through the College Church in the Grand Center district of St. Louis, needs additional funding and volunteer staffing to meet increased demand.

What to Do Next:

Monitor the Missouri legislature for attempts to change the new voter photo identification law and withdraw the provision to cover costs.

Participate in education outreach to minimize confusion about the new requirements, how to meet them, and how to ensure fair treatment at the polls.

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