

REQUIRE VOTERS TO HAVE PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

A government-issued photo identification (“photo ID”) is a fundamental requirement of an effective electoral system that protects the validity of every vote and voter. Photo ID is required in almost every aspect of our personal and professional lives to verify that an individual is in fact who he or she claims to be. Given the importance of elections, it is vital to ensure each voter is properly identified to protect against voter fraud and guarantee a fair outcome.

Secure elections require our officials to have the ability to verify the identities of all voters. Requiring a photo ID is an effective, common-sense, and popular policy that will help ensure fair and honest elections. Eighty-five percent of Americans support the requirement of a photo ID to prove a person’s identity when casting a ballot.

This 85% support for photo ID requirements is even more astounding when considering the political and dishonest rhetoric of opponents of these measures. Their rhetoric includes claims of adverse reactions from voters, claims of people lacking an identification, and worse, race-baiting language. However, research from Harvard University and the National Bureau of Economic Research recently showed no adverse effect on voter turnout or registration after implementing photo ID requirements for voters.

Additionally, a common argument is that voter ID laws have a disproportionate or disparate effect on minority populations. This argument does not consider the fact that photo IDs are already required to buy alcohol and tobacco, board a domestic flight, drive a car, and open a bank account—all activities in which the broader public, including minority populations, regularly participate.

These Harvard researchers also found another positive byproduct regarding the implementation of

voter identification laws: preventing fraud. By studying elections between 2008 and 2018, Harvard researchers used publicly available databases on documented fraud and noted that voter ID laws could deter fraud.

Twenty-five states have already established requirements of government-issued photo ID for the purpose of voting, which is easily available at no cost to the voter. While 15 of these states allow other identification documents if a photo ID is not presented, eight states specifically require a photo ID to vote. These eight states have proven it is possible to secure the vote with no inconvenience or cost to anyone.

THE FACTS

- ★ 25 states do not have photo ID requirements to vote.
- ★ While 25 states require photo ID to vote, 15 of them have work-arounds. These work-arounds allow a person who forgets his or her photo ID to have other ways to cast his or her ballot without using a photo ID.
- ★ 46 out of 47 European countries require a photo ID to vote.
- ★ Mexico has required all voters to present a photo ID since 1991. Every voter in Mexico must have a tamper-proof photo ID that includes a thumbprint and embossed hologram.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Require a government-issued photo ID to vote, leaving implementation to the individual states.
- ★ Offer free photo ID cards to eligible voters to remove the barrier of access or financial difficulty.

- ★ Create a “cure” for individuals who show up at a polling place without a photo voter ID that requires them to have some form of photo ID before a person’s vote is counted.

REFERENCES

Interactive Map, America First Policy Institute.

New Study Confirms Voter ID Laws Don't Hurt Election Turnout by Hans

A. von Spakovsky, The Heritage Foundation (Feb. 2019).

Strict ID Laws Don't Stop Voters: Evidence from a U.S. Nationwide Panel, 2008–2018 by Enrico Cantoni and

Vincent Pons, National Bureau of Economic Research (May 2021).

The Top 25 Common-sense State Election Integrity Reforms, America First Policy Institute (Oct. 2021).