



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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THE COST OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA PHOTO ID BILL IS TOO HIGH

The fiscal impact statement underestimates the cost of implementing the voter photo ID law

- The fiscal impact statement estimates the cost of the photo ID law at around \$1,354,000 in the first year, with annual recurring costs of \$260,000. Other states' fiscal impact statements estimate much larger costs for their photo ID laws (such as \$22 million in Missouri and \$18.5-\$25.2 million in North Carolina).
- The fiscal impact statement estimates the cost of providing free photo ID cards at \$100,000; this would only cover 20,000 voters. But around 180,000 registered voters in South Carolina lack a driver's license or ID.
- The cost of providing free ID cards cannot be avoided because it is unconstitutional to have a photo ID requirement without providing free ID cards to those who request them.
- Adequate voter education will cost more than the fiscal impact statement estimates. The fiscal statement estimates that South Carolina will spend \$160,000 on voter education associated with the photo ID bill. But postage of one piece of mail to each registered voter alone would cost almost \$1 million.

The fiscal impact statement is missing many additional costs that will have to be covered by the state or counties to implement photo ID laws

- Some of the missing costs include: the cost of printing and processing additional provisional ballots; the cost of additional pollworker training; the cost of modifying the statewide voter registration system to track whether ID has been provided; and the cost of revising forms and materials, including pollworker training materials.

Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds will not be sufficient to cover the costs of a photo ID law

- South Carolina has around \$1 million remaining HAVA funds. It should stretch these out over as many years as possible so as to maintain election equipment and technology rather than exhaust them on the photo ID law.
- If HAVA funds are not expended, they will stay in South Carolina's bank account earning interest that could pay for many of the annual license and maintenance costs in the future.

HAVA money would be better spent ensuring votes are counted properly than eliminating non-existent voter fraud

- There is no evidence of systemic voter fraud in South Carolina, but there is ongoing evidence that the DRE machines inaccurately count election results (e.g., in 2010 in Richland County, 1,127 votes were left uncounted due to machine and technology problems).

The State and County election offices can't afford to cover the shortfall left if HAVA funds are drained to cover photo ID laws

- South Carolina's projected budget deficit for 2012 is \$877 million (17.4% of its 2011 budget).
- Counties currently spend between \$800,000 and \$1 million on elections annually, and the cost of maintenance of machines increased by 15-20% in 2010. Counties simply can't afford to absorb the additional costs of a photo-ID law.

Even if the state provides free photo ID's, there are hidden costs that will have to be borne by citizens, many of whom are the least privileged in our society

- Getting a free ID card can involve transportation costs and require time away from work or childcare. Underlying documentation, such as a passport, birth certificate, or naturalization papers, is often necessary. Many people don't have these documents and obtaining them can be expensive (e.g. the fees for a U.S. passport start at \$55).
- These costs systematically deter certain groups from voting more than others – such as minorities, the disabled, the elderly, and the poor.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages.