



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN  
EDUCATION FUND**

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To: Senate Committee on Transportation and Elections

From: Andrea Kaminski, Executive Director, League of Women Voters of Wisconsin

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 6

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today about why the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin strongly opposes Senate Bill 6. Over the years there have been a number of voter ID bills, generating much legislative and public debate. The League has steadfastly opposed them as legislation that is unneeded and unfair. I won't use my limited time before you today to repeat the facts about Wisconsin's tradition of clean elections or about the people who would be at risk of disenfranchisement because of this legislation. I will focus specifically on government accountability.

The League of Women Voters believes government must be able to function efficiently with a minimum of conflict, wasted time or duplication of effort. Wisconsin law should provide for election administration that is adequately coordinated and funded, to achieve both statewide standards that are uniformly applied and local municipal effectiveness.

Last year many candidates promised voters that, if elected, they would go through state agency budget requests line by line, seeking to cut expenses that cannot be shown to be useful or effective. Let's hold voter ID to that test.

In the nonprofit world, where I operate, funders are seeking increased accountability. With reduced endowments, they want to know that the programs they fund will make a difference. Many funders require nonprofits to identify measurable outcomes in our grant requests, so we can assess later whether a program was successful. Likewise in the for-profit world, no business leader would undertake the expense of a program intended to address unsubstantiated rumors in the hope of achieving results that cannot be measured. They want accountability.

In the case of government programs, the taxpayers are the funders. If the voter ID bill is passed, how will you measure the success of this government program?

Proponents say voter ID is necessary to fight fraud. Yet the only type of fraud this government program would prevent is impersonation at the polls, and there are no documented cases of that having happened in Wisconsin. So how will you measure success, or improvement?

Proponents say voters are losing confidence in our elections because they suspect that illegal votes are diluting their own. If this bill is passed into law, we can almost guarantee there will be fewer votes cast and counted – which will magnify the impact of those votes that are counted. Is that how you define success?

Proponents claim that state-issued IDs are easy to obtain and that the ID program will not prevent eligible citizens from voting. How will you measure that? The data on how many provisional ballots are cast versus how many are actually counted will be telling. According to the Election Assistance Commission, 38 percent of provisional ballots cast in the November 2006 election in our state were not counted. Perhaps we should examine a sample of those casting uncounted provisional ballots to determine if, in fact, they are eligible voters.

Finally let's get back to cost accountability for this government program. Taxpayer funding will be needed at the state and local levels for:

1. The Department of Motor Vehicles, to meet the demand for voting IDs or certificates. Currently our election system is set up at the ward level with polling places in neighborhoods, to encourage civic participation. How will you make it as convenient and accessible for people to get an ID as it is to vote?
2. The Government Accountability Board, for training local officials and educating citizens about the new law and procedures. This will take significant staff time, as well as funding for advertising and other direct expenses.
3. Local governments, for training Election Day officials and educating voters in their communities. In particular, clerks will have to train poll workers on how to process provisional ballots. Most have never had any experience with this. Also, many municipal clerks do their public service at night and on weekends, while holding another job during the weekday. Yet voters who cast a provisional ballot need to be able to bring their ID to the clerk's "office" by 4:00PM the day after the election. To process provisional ballots clerks may need to add supplementary hours and, in some cases, take additional time off their "day jobs" to serve voters.

Given that a voter ID program is expensive, unneeded and unfair, how will you measure success? How will you be accountable to the taxpayers, to the voters?

The best thing for our state is to have a robust civic participation for a strong, representative government. We urge this committee to reject Senate Bill 6 and turn your attention to positive measures to ensure that every eligible citizen has the opportunity to vote.

Thank you.