



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN EDUCATION FUND

122 State Street, #201A
Madison, WI 53703-2500

Phone: (608) 256-0827
lwwwisconsin@lwwwi.org

<http://www.lwwwi.org>

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To: All Wisconsin Senators

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

Re: Opposition to vote on SB 6 today

The League of Women Voters challenges the Wisconsin State Senate's authority to vote today on a bill to require voters to show a state-issued photo ID at the polls. Based on testimony given in January and in fiscal notes in prior years, this bill would have substantial budgetary impact.

At a time when the Governor and the majority party are seeking to make extensive budgetary cuts, the League questions the need for a new government program that adds to the state budget and to the budgets of all municipalities. Further, since this bill has significant costs associated with it, the Senate needs 20 members present for a vote.

Challenges to similar laws enacted in other states, including Indiana and Georgia, have provided ample evidence to show that voter ID laws need substantial funding to be implemented in a manner that protects the constitutional rights of citizens. Courts have required the following, according to the Brennan Center for Justice:

- Photo IDs sufficient for voting must be available free of charge for all eligible citizens who do not already have an acceptable ID. States cannot limit free IDs to those who swear they are indigent.
- Photo IDs must be readily accessible to all voters, without undue burden. At a minimum, Wisconsin will likely have to expand the number of ID-issuing offices and extend their operating hours to meet this requirement.
- States must undertake substantial voter outreach and public education efforts to ensure that voters are apprised of the law's requirements and the procedures for obtaining the IDs they will need to vote. In addition, some courts may require states to ensure that all the documents required in order to obtain photo IDs are free and easily available to prospective voters.

A summary of the cost areas and case law can be found in a 2011 report by the Brennan Center for Justice, "The Cost of Voter ID: What the Courts Say." <http://www.scribd.com/doc/49106004/The-Costs-of-Voter-ID-Laws>

A bipartisan commission of auditors recently found that the state of Indiana has spent more than \$12 million over four years to implement its voter ID law (Iowa State Association of County Auditors, 2011). The Department of Transportation estimates it would cost \$2.7 million annually in lost revenue just to provide the free IDs, and this does not include the costs of training election officials and educating voters.

It is irresponsible for the Wisconsin Senate to even consider this expensive government program when proponents can offer no evidence that it will improve the integrity of elections in our state. To do so while the majority party attempts to take away bargaining rights from state workers reveals the political motivation behind the voter ID bill. To vote on a bill with fiscal impact without a quorum is illegal. The League calls on Senators of conscience to reject this blatant power grab.