



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN  
EDUCATION FUND

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

Phone: (608) 256-0827  
Fax: (608) 256-1761

<http://www.lwwwi.org>  
[lwwwisconsin@lwwwi.org](mailto:lwwwisconsin@lwwwi.org)

March 3, 2008

To: All Members of the Wisconsin Senate

From: Melanie G. Ramey, President

Re: Oppose AJR 17

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, we write in strong opposition to the constitutional amendment, AJR 17, that would require voters to obtain and show a government issued photo ID before exercising their constitutional right to vote.

Photo ID requirements are one of the most serious threats in decades to our efforts to ensure the right of every eligible American to vote. Research shows that they encourage racial and ethnic discrimination at polling places, prevent eligible voters from participating in our democracy, limit turnout, and do very little to combat genuine instances of voter's impersonating someone else at the polls.

The numbers of people who could be disenfranchised by the proposed amendment is daunting. The Department of Transportation estimated in 2003 that approximately 130,000 people of voting age across the state did not have a driver's license and that only 20% of these people would ever get the necessary documentation if it were required. The burden will be greatest for those people – including the elderly, low-income, minority, homeless, or handicapped – for whom it is most cost prohibitive and inconvenient to take off work, get transportation, stand in line, and apply for the documentation. In many cases, these individuals don't have the underlying documentation that is needed to get a Wisconsin ID. In other words, this requirement would disenfranchise the very people who currently must work the hardest to vote at all.

The right to vote, and to have your vote counted, is the most important civil right we have. Photo ID requirements are one of the greatest threats to fair and equal voting rights today. State governments should be in the business of encouraging full participation of our citizenry, not developing ways to limit the right to vote.

Any proposal that raises barriers to voting is a fear-based approach instead of a fact-based solution. For these reasons, the League hopes members of the Senate will do the right thing by voting against legislation and instead focusing on provisions that would help improve polling place operations, foster effective training and recruitment of poll workers, and make election administration more efficient, secure, accurate and recountable.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Kaminski at (608) 256-0827.