

Rock Hill Herald Online

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE | July 14, 2010

Make it easier, not harder, for people to vote

Your editorial about the Voter ID bill (H. 3418) was mostly on target.

The ID requirement does represent a solution in search of a problem, in the absence of credible voter impersonation cases in recent elections.

We disagree, however, on the harmful impact it would have on our voting process, which a full five Constitutional amendments (the First, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Nineteenth, and Twenty-Sixth) protect.

In York County, according to 2010 statistics furnished by the state DMV and Election Commission, 7.19 percent of registered voters lack DMV-issued photo IDs. These people would find the lack of a photo ID a "serious impediment" to voting.

Why would we want to make it harder to vote for nearly 9,000 voters in York County who already hold voter registration cards? We should reduce, not increase, barriers to voting, when we know that approximately 1 million South Carolinians are eligible to vote but are not registered.

This is not, as your editorial suggested, simply a partisan demographic issue: nearly 75 percent of the York County registered voters lacking a DMV photo ID are white and between the ages of 25 and 64.

It is, however, a fiscal issue. The agencies that will be required to provide photo ID proactively will also have to conduct additional training for poll workers and mount a statewide voter education program.

These expenditures would be required, at a time when we are furloughing teachers and cutting back on health benefits for our neediest residents.

Whether the funds come from federal or state revenues, this outlay still represents a dubious use of our tax dollars.

Protecting the "integrity of the vote" should mean that we do everything possible to enable eligible voters to exercise their precious right to vote. H.3418 fails to do that.

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