



SOUTH CAROLINA'S VOTER PHOTO ID LAW

On May 18, 2011, Governor Nikki Haley signed one of the most restrictive voter identification laws in the nation. To be allowed to vote, you must be able to show one of the following:

- (1) a valid South Carolina driver's license;
- (2) an identification card containing a photograph issued by the SC Department of Motor Vehicles;
- (3) a U.S. passport;
- (4) military identification card containing a photograph issued by the federal government;
- or
- (5) a South Carolina voter registration card containing a photograph (Photo registration cards are not yet available.)

Many South Carolina voters do not have the necessary identification that this law requires and will face barriers to voting as a result. Some of the other problems with this law include:

- Voter ID laws have a disproportionate and unfair impact on low-income individuals, racial and ethnic minority voters, senior citizens, voters with disabilities and others who do not have a government-issued ID or the money to acquire one.
- Requiring voters to obtain an ID in order to vote is equivalent to a poll tax. Although South Carolina has offered to issue certain forms of ID for free, the certified copies of birth certificates or other necessary documents cost money and, in certain cases, may require a law suit to obtain a court order for a name change or a delayed birth certificate. Many citizens simply cannot afford these costs.
- South Carolina will incur sizable costs when providing IDs to voters who do not have them. Given the financial strain our state is already experiencing, this is an unnecessary allocation of taxpayer dollars.
- Proponents of voter ID laws have failed to demonstrate that individual voter fraud is a pervasive problem anywhere in the state.

Next steps

South Carolina's voter photo ID law has the potential to deny the right to vote to thousands of registered voters who do not have and, in many instances, cannot obtain the limited forms of identification the law requires. As such, the law impedes access to the polls and is at odds with the fundamental right to vote.

The ACLU of South Carolina opposed the law while it was being debated in the legislature and continues to advocate for progressive election law reform.

Please contact our office if you are concerned that this new law may impact your ability to exercise your right to vote. Let us know that you are concerned about the Voter ID law and leave your contact information; one of our interviewers will then respond to your call, letter or email.

ACLU of South Carolina
PO Box 20998
Charleston, SC 29413

Tel: 843-720-1423
Email: info@aclusouthcarolina.org