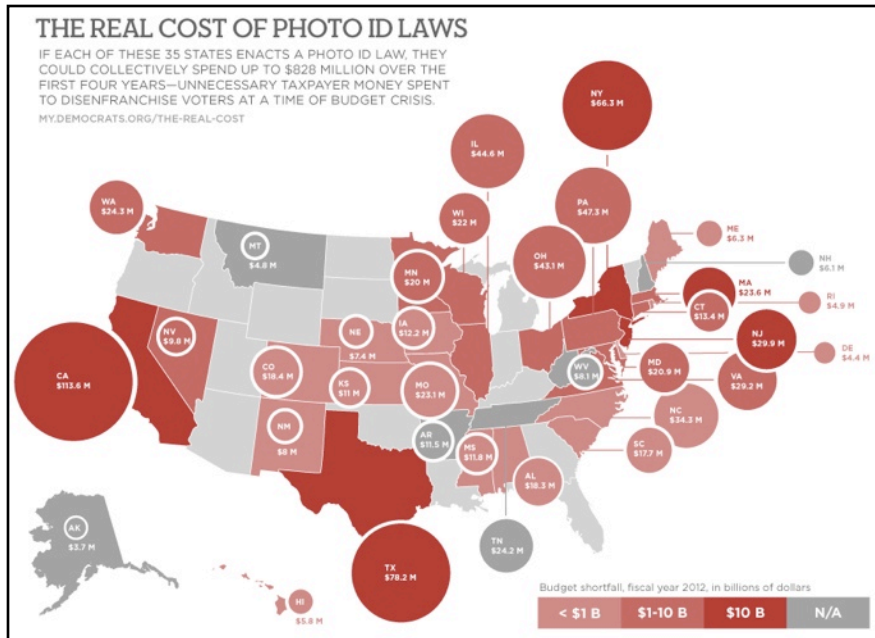


# The Reporter

## Pennsylvania's Voter ID Law

*Is it constitutional, or not?*



### America's Voting Policy

Other states that have strict Voter ID Laws like Pennsylvania include Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Tennessee and Wisconsin, and South Carolina is waiting for approval from the federal Justice Department for their strict version of the Voter ID Law. Other states have more options, voters can either show some form of photo identification, show another state specified form of identification or be vouched for by another voter who has voter ID. The states that employ the more alternative identification are Alabama, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Michigan and South Dakota. The remaining states require either some form of approved non-photo ID or no ID at all.



Voter ID Laws are laws that required voters to present photo identification every time they vote. These laws began relatively recently, Virginia being the first state to attempt implementing them in 1999. For many states the list of acceptable photo identification is not only strict but also short. Many voters don't have a form of identification found on this concise list and some don't have the means to get one. The supporters of these Voter ID Laws are claiming to be attempting to

cut down on voter fraudulence while the opponents are claiming voter suppression. These laws have sparked debate between the two parties with the Republicans generally supporting the laws and Democrats fighting them. Pennsylvania has just recently ratified the law instituting the strict list of appropriate forms of identification and many believe it is a means to suppress the generally democratic vote of Philadelphia.

**“In Texas, you can vote with a gun license but not with a student ID”**

VOTER ID IN PHILADELPHIA

Different legal organizations throughout Pennsylvania have taken up arms against the new Voter ID law. Four of those organizations, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia (PILCOP), the Advancement Project and the law firm of Arnold & Porter, LLP, have filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the this new law. They are requesting a preliminary injunction to prevent the law from ever going into effect. There are ten individuals in the case, all of which have not been able to obtain approved photo identification. There are various reasons as to why the plaintiffs haven't been able to obtain identification, some have lost ID over the years, some have married and changed their names, or some have gone through gender changes and are no longer properly represented by their documentation. This law disproportionately affects women, those in poverty and the elderly, all of which are known to generally vote democratic. Women are affected because they often change their name after marriage, the poor can't afford the documentation that is required in order to get the "free" ID and, the

elderly are often a combination of both, many have lost their documents and can't afford to get new copies. There are possible solutions to some of these problems, like making birth certificates free, but others will still be permanently disenfranchised. Some birth certificates have been lost so no matter how much they cost that person will never be able to get identification.



BUDGETARY STRAIN

**THE REAL COST OF PHOTO ID:**  
AN UNNECESSARY, EXPENSIVE, AND INTRUSIVE VOTER RESTRICTION IN A TIME OF FISCAL CRISIS

Voter ID Laws are not only causing constitutional issues but also budgetary ones. States that are enacting these laws are signing up for long-term strains on their budget. Collectively the 35 states that have either already passed the law or are looking to could cost

taxpayers \$828 million in the first four years. These 35 states are already facing a collective deficit of over \$98 billion dollars in the upcoming fiscal year. States that have already enacted the law, such as Indiana have spent more than \$10 million on providing identification cards in four years alone. Many states do not even have a cost estimation before they push the bill through their congress. Politically the cost of photo identification has been generally ignored in order to gain

support. Supplying photo identification is not the only cost to the states. In order to survive constitutional scrutiny states have to extensively educate the public about the changes, undertake outreach to voters who lack identification and, implement changes throughout state bureaucracy, along with provide the photo identification free of charge. In the time of a financial crisis it doesn't seem like an appropriate thing to be spending money in such a frivolous manner.

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE LAW

While the republicans are claiming the ID Laws are only a means to end voter fraud, but there hasn't been any fraud reported. Millions of dollars in spending later and "the Department of Justice discovered virtually no polling-place voter fraud" (Hansen). A study done by Washington State revealed voter fraud happens approximately 0.0009% of the time (Truth). This epidemic of "voter fraud", which was largely unfounded, has created a wave of panic that the Voter ID Law has ridden into legality by

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