

League of Women Voters® of Virginia

January 28, 2013

ACTION ALERT:

The Senate Privileges and Elections (P&E) committee will meet on Tuesday, January 29 and take up several measures that the League of Women Voters of Virginia is **OPPOSED** to. **We are asking that you call or email your Senator if they are on the Senate P&E Committee and ask them to OPPOSE the following bills:**

SB 719. This bill removes several items from the list of *acceptable identification documents* that a voter must present when voting at the polls on Election Day: current utility bill, bank statement, government check, or paycheck that shows the name and address of the voter.

The League supports free, fair and accessible elections for all eligible Americans and we oppose efforts to create barriers that block citizens from fully participating in our great democracy. Voting is the one time when all citizens have an equal say in how we shall be governed. This bill threatens our equality, and thus our democracy, by gaming the system for political gain. Further, Virginia spent millions of dollars educating voters on the changes in the law last year. While not everything was perfect in the past election, a record number of voters came to the polls. If this law passes, it will disenfranchise many voters. Legislators should address the real and serious problems of our state instead of allocating funds to address a non-existent problem.

SB 723. This bill would create an electoral system in which the Commonwealth's *electoral votes for president of the United States* would be allocated by congressional district as opposed to the current system where all of the electoral votes from Virginia go to the individual that receives the most votes. The very heart of our great democracy is at risk of being destroyed. If this bill were to pass, no longer will the candidate with the most votes be guaranteed the most

Lastly, it is highly likely that if SB 723 were enacted it would increase the current problems of congressionally skewed seats and make the drawing of district lines even more politically charged and unfair. SB 723 would allow a presidential candidate to become president even when a strong majority of the electorate voted for the other candidate.

SB 1256. This bill would require a *photo ID* at the polls and eliminate all forms of identification that do not contain a photograph of the voter from the list of forms of identification any one of which a voter must present in order to be allowed to vote.

Besides the huge cost to implement and maintain the new government program, photo ID requirements represent one of the most serious threats in decades to our efforts to ensure the right of every eligible citizen to vote and have their vote counted. As Americans we believe that all men and women are "created equal." If America wants to live up to its promise to provide all citizens with the same opportunities, then we can't pass laws that block eligible Americans from voting, and deny them the opportunity to participate equally in our great democracy.

Lastly, ID requirements disproportionately affect the elderly, young people, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and the poor. Underlying costs to obtain a photo ID are hidden and significant barriers. Even when the ID itself is free, there are hidden costs, including transportation and fees related to acquiring supporting documents like birth certificates and marriage licenses.

Click here to find out [Who's my Legislator?](#)

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